

**BULWARKS**

**OF**  
**THE FAITH**

**REV. JAMES M. GRAY**

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# THE BULWARKS OF THE FAITH

A Brief and Popular Treatise on the Evidences of  
Christianity, or the Authenticity, Truth and  
Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures

Arranged with Questions for use in Bible Institutes  
and Training Schools

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## **PREFATORY NOTE**

This book gives the gist of the author's lectures on the themes of which it treats, and which have been given from time to time to Seminary and Training School students, and also before more popular gatherings, in Y. M. C. A. lecture courses and elsewhere. It is hoped that it may be useful to those who have not access to larger books, or perhaps the time or ability to use them. The questions accompanying each chapter are intended to take the place of an index, and may possibly increase the value of the book as an introductory textbook for teachers in Bible Institutes and Normal Training classes, whose number is constantly growing, and to whose efficiency for their particular work the author would be glad to contribute.



PART FIRST

THE AUTHENTICITY OF  
THE BIBLE





## CHAPTER I.

### THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

**I**N this little work on the Bulwarks of the Faith we begin with the Authenticity of the Bible because in the order of thought that seems to come first. We have a Bible, but how did it get here? Is it authentic? Was it written by the authors whose names it bears and are its contents in all material points the same as when it came from their hands? It is a very simple question, although very important, and in a general sense can be answered in a very simple way.

To prove the Bible to be authentic we have but to trace its history from century to century to its source. We begin at the fifteenth century because then we have our first printed Bible, a comparison of which with that of the present time will show the two to be identical.

But the Bible was in manuscript, i.e.,

in written form before it was printed, copies of which were scattered throughout the public and private libraries of Europe, and in possession of the inmates of the monasteries. That there were very many of them is gathered from the fact that even in our own time the scholars who prepared the revised version of the English translation of the Bible had as many as 2,000 MSS. of the Old Testament, and 3,000 of the New to examine in the determination of that text. These MSS. did not in every case cover the whole of either Testament, but only different parts of it, and yet putting them all together they covered the whole of both Testaments many times. Dr. Angus, in his Bible Handbook, makes an interesting comparison, showing the relative value of such a fact as this in proving the genuineness of the Bible text. The text of the classics, for example, of which the world thinks about as much as the Church does of the Bible, and which are taught in all our High Schools and Colleges, is based for

the most part on the examination of not more than ten or twenty MSS., but is nevertheless perfectly satisfactory to those who teach it. Surely if the authenticity of a Homer or a Virgil is not seriously questioned under such circumstances, the child of God may have great confidence in that of the sacred Scriptures, which is based on an examination of MSS. more than a hundred times as great.

And some of these MSS. are very old. Scholars have ways of ascertaining their age when no date is attached to them, by the material on which they are written, the character of the letters and the general style of the writing employed, and from these particulars there is little doubt that three of these MSS. at least—we speak now of the New Testament only, are as old as the fourth century of the Christian era. And these three, each of which contains practically the whole of the New Testament, are, strangely enough, in possession of the three different branches of the Christian Church, the Latin, the Greek

and the Protestant. One is known as the Vatican MS. and is found in the Vatican library at Rome; another is known as the Sinaitic and is kept at St. Petersburg, Russia; the third, described as the Alexandrian, is in the British Museum, London. What a demonstration are they to the authenticity of the New Testament during a period of 1,500 years! Here again an instructive and encouraging comparison may be drawn between the Scriptures and the classics, since none of the few MSS. referred to in the latter case, with possibly a single exception, is any more ancient than the tenth century, while most of them, we are informed, are three or four centuries later. By so much more has God preserved for Himself a witness in the earth.

But we have remoter evidence than this. While there are no MSS. of the New Testament in existence of an age earlier than the IVth century, there are quotations from it in the writings of the Christian fathers of the third century, which for the present purpose is equally as good. If

the writers of that day quoted from the New Testament, then, of course, the latter must have been in existence prior to that day. And these quotations are very copious, so much so that if every printed or written copy of the New Testament were now destroyed the whole could be gathered again from that source. This is not a probability indeed, but a fact, since so safe an authority as Dr. Westcott records the circumstances under which it has actually been done. It is legitimate therefore to say that the New Testament of the nineteenth century agrees with that of the third.

But we trace its history still further, for that which is thus found in the quotations of the third century is found in the versions of the second. A version differs from a MS. in this, that while the latter always means a copy of the Bible in the original language, Hebrew or Greek, the former is a copy in some other tongue. There are two of these versions, the Latin and the Syriac, known to have existed in

the second century, the first being the Bible of the Western, and the second that of the Eastern section of the Church at that period. There is strong reason to believe that these versions were as early as 150 A.D., and if so they practically connect us with the Apostolic period, since the last of the twelve, the beloved John, did not die till the close of the first century.

Have we not cause for gratitude in this? A chain of four links binds the first and the nineteenth centuries together, in this respect, and through the printed Bible of the fifteenth, the manuscript of the fourth, the quotations of the third, and the versions of the second, we have an unbroken line of testimony that the New Testament we look upon today is in all essentials the same as that which was well known and read, and believed and rejoiced in by the redeemed from the earliest period of the Christian Church!

QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. How is the word "Authentic" explained?
2. How do we prove the Authenticity of the Bible?
3. At what century do we begin, and why?
4. Where, and in what form was the Bible before it was printed?
5. How many MSS. are now in existence?
6. What comparison shows the value of this fact?
7. How do scholars determine the age of MSS.?
8. How old are some of the MSS. of the New Testament?
9. Where are three of the oldest located?
10. How does their age compare with the classics?
11. What evidence for the New Testament is found in the third century?
12. How valuable is this evidence?
13. What is a "version?"
14. Name the versions of the second century.
15. What cause for gratitude have we?

## CHAPTER II.

### THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

**T**HE oldest printed copy of the Old Testament was about the same date as the New, prior to which the text existed in the written or manuscript form. We have already stated that large numbers of these MSS. must have been accessible, from the fact that even in our own time nearly 2,000, representing, generally, different parts of the Old Testament, were in the hands of our scholars for comparison in the determination of the text of the revised version of the English Bible. None of them are as old, however, as those of the New Testament. It will be recalled that some of the latter are as ancient as the fourth century of the Christian era, but in the case of the Old Testament there is no MS. with perhaps the single exception of a copy of the Law, earlier than the ninth or tenth. There are



several probable reasons to account for this, as for example, the fragile character of the material on which the writing was done, the persecutions of the Jews which often resulted in the destruction of their sacred treasures, their own desire sometimes to put them out of the way lest they should fall into the hands of enemies who would corrupt them, or pollute them, and finally, it is thought a wholesale destruction of early MSS. occurred upon the final establishment of an authoritative text. This took place as the result of the comparison of earlier MSS. by a guild of devout and learned Hebrews known as the Massorites, about the period referred to, viz., the ninth century.

But while the MSS. reach back no further than the ninth or tenth century, it must not be supposed that we have reached the end of all possible investigation. While tracing a stream to its source we may be sometimes in a bay, sometimes in a broad river, sometimes in the midst of a foaming torrent, and sometimes in a

quiet brook, but the identification of the stream goes on apace. It is so with the case in hand. Behind the MSS., are the Targums. These are paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Aramaic or Chaldaic dialect, whose origin is associated with the Babylonian captivity. At that time the Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, and when the Old Testament was read in the synagogues it was necessary to explain it to the younger generation. These explanations, or running commentaries, or paraphrases were at first transmitted orally, but at about the time of the advent of Christ they were reduced to writing and took this name of Targum. Ten of these old Targums are still in existence, covering different parts of the Old Testament, the most recent of which is at least as old as the fourth century of the Christian era. They are not of great value so far as accuracy of text is concerned, but give indisputable evidence of the existence of the Old Testament prior to that period.

Still earlier however, are the versions, the copies of the Old Testament in some other language than the Hebrew. They are varied and numerous, and found in all the centuries down to the time of Christ and even much beyond it. Of only one need we speak, for many reasons the most important, known as the Septuagint, so-called from a word which means seventy. This is a Greek translation, traditionally supposed to have been made by that number of Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt, during the reign and under the patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus in the third century B.C. This version Jesus Himself used, from it He quoted, as did also the evangelists and apostles in the writings of the New Testament. Indeed, as another says, "The early successes of Christianity are almost inconceivable except as the way was prepared by the diffusion of the Old Testament in this version throughout the known world."

We have thus followed the history of the Old Testament as well as the New to

its source; for the existence of the Septuagint in the third century B.C., points to an earlier original of which it was a copy, and what original could that have been but the Sacred Scripture of Ezra's time who lived only in the second century preceding? Not more than two hundred years at the farthest intervene between the close of the Canon at the hands of the last of the inspired writers, and the date of that version whose history reads like an event of our own time.

It will have been noticed that we spoke of the contents of our Bible as in all material points identical with that of the Apostolic age, but the qualification suggests a query as to the sense or degree in which it differs, if at all? In reply it should be borne in mind that the MSS. and versions have been copied hundreds and thousands of times, not only by different copyists and in different centuries, but in different tongues, and that in the very nature of the case various readings and even errors may have found their way into the text.

But no one should be alarmed at this for it is comparatively an easy matter for scholars competent for the task, to examine these MSS. and versions and determine whether all point to one original, and if so, what that original is. As a matter of fact, so satisfactorily has this been accomplished that the latest and best Biblical scholarship is not afraid to say that in the case of the New Testament, for example, we have in 999 cases out of every one thousand, the very words of the inspired original. But if this be true of the New we need have no fear of the Old, since substantially, as we have seen, it is that which was used by the blessed Lord Himself, and of which He testified, "The Scripture cannot be broken."

Dr. Ezra Abbott, of Harvard College, one of the ablest of textual critics, in speaking of the various readings so-called, dismisses nineteen-twentieths of them from consideration altogether as obviously of no importance, says nineteen-twentieths of the remainder only relate to matters of

spelling, grammatical construction, the order of words, etc., without affecting the sense, and that even what is left does not involve any Christian doctrine or duty whatsoever. No better evidence of the truth of this need be required than the following: The King James version was prepared nearly 300 years ago, and since that time great progress has been made in the knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek tongues, as well as the geography and archaeology of the Bible, and a large number of MSS. have been discovered, notably the three oldest of the New Testament extant, and yet the Revised Version of our day does not change a single important fact or doctrine in the whole Bible, but only, in some cases, the number of proof-texts by which it may be sustained. What a demonstration this presents not only of a divine original, but a divine oversight over the translations of that original in all the years!

QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What is the age of the oldest MSS. of the Old Testament?
2. How is this comparatively modern date explained?
3. When and by whom was their text authoritatively established?
4. What is the history of the Targums?
5. How old are some of these Targums now in existence?
6. What is the history of the Septuagint Version?
7. How near does this bring us to the sources of the Old Testament?
8. What accounts for the various readings in the MSS. and versions?
9. Why should this not occasion alarm?
10. How near does our English Bible approach the original?
11. What is the testimony of Professor Abbott?
12. How is this corroborated?

## CHAPTER III.

### THE GROWTH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

**T**HUS far we have simply tried to ascertain whether as to its authorship and contents the Bible was, generally speaking, the same as at the beginning. But there is a question back of that. Admitted that the Bible is today the same as it has always been known, how did it come into its present form, or, as the title of this chapter suggests, how did it grow? We shall answer this question only for the Old Testament just now, giving the traditional view as to how the books came together, and reserving for further consideration those objections to that view presented under the name of Higher Criticism.

For convenience we shall divide the Old Testament into three parts, the historical, poetical and prophetical books. The first-named begin with the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible, commonly



understood as written by Moses and placed by him at the side of the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle (Deut. xxxi. 26). Joshua is supposed to be the author of the book bearing his name, which he added to the foregoing (Joshua xxiv. 26). Judges, Ruth, and the two books of Samuel are usually ascribed to Samuel (I. Sam. x. 25). The writer of Kings is unknown, although by some the name of Jeremiah has been attached to it. It is interesting to observe in the reading of Kings that the author frequently refers to the court records of the different kings of whom he speaks, from which his data were compiled. The books of Chronicles were compiled much later, perhaps by Ezra. They were written apparently to show the division of Jewish families and possessions prior to the Babylonian captivity, in order to restore the same after that event. In them emphasis is laid on the history of Judah rather than Israel, because of the Messianic expectations in that line. Esther is a story of the captivity, the human authorship of

which is unknown, by some ascribed to Ezra and by others to Mordecai, but which bears evidence of being taken from the records of the Persian king of that period, Ahasuerus. As to Ezra and Nehemiah, the last of the historical books, no serious question has ever been raised as to their being written by the men whose names they bear.

The poetical books, strictly speaking, are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. It seems strange to speak of these as poetical, when in the English translation they so closely resemble prose; but the Hebrew poetry differs from that of most other nations in the fact that its rhythm is in the recurrence of the thought rather than the sound. This circumstance makes it comparatively easy to translate Bible poetry without serious loss to the thought, which is not true of ordinary poetry. Job is supposed to have been written by Elihu, by Moses or by Job himself; indeed, there is no good reason why the last-named may not have been its au-

thor. Its antiquity is very great, and, aside from the question of its authorship, the circumstances described must have taken place somewhere about the time of Abraham. As to the book of Psalms (from a Hebrew word which means "praises"), about half were written by David, "the sweet singer of Israel," judging from the titles and references to them in the New Testament. Fifty are anonymous, and twenty-five ascribed to other persons whose names are stated. Just when the book was completed as we now have it would be difficult to say, but doubtless not later than the period of Ezra. Proverbs is the first book of the Bible prefaced by the name of its author, Solomon, who may have written the whole, with the exception of the last two chapters, whose separate authors are therein named. Instruction in proverbs was common in the early history of most of the Eastern nations, and there is supposed to have been a distinct class of persons in Israel at this time known as "Teachers of Wisdom." The form of ad-

dress in Proverbs, "My son," is supposed to be not that of a father to a child, but a teacher to his pupil. The peculiar value of this book in the canon is well stated by Dr. Bridges in his excellent commentary upon it, when he says, "While other Scriptures show us our high calling, this instructs minutely how to walk in it." "It is for practical ethics," says another, "what the Psalms are for devotion." Ecclesiastes is a Greek word, meaning "The Preacher," and the authorship of the book by that name is ascribed to Solomon. There are at least four reasons for this: (1) The indirect claim of the book itself (i. 1, 12); (2) the fitness of Solomon to write it; (3) the general opinion of Jews and Christians that he wrote it; (4) the lack of agreement among objectors as to any other author or period. The design of the book seems to be to show the insufficiency of all earthly objects to confer happiness, and thus prepare man to receive the true happiness in Christ. Not that this design was necessarily present in

the mind of its human author, but that it explains the purpose of the Holy Spirit in causing the book to be placed where it is. It is a book much spoken against by some, and which skeptics and errorists of one kind and another are in the habit of quoting to bolster up their erratic opinions on some questions. It is said to give license to certain forms of error both in doctrine and practice which antagonize other parts of the revealed Word. But the difficulty disappears when we understand that it is the natural man, not the regenerated man, who is speaking throughout, and that the words are either put into the mouth of an objector, or else are the language of Solomon himself during his apostacy. The Song of Solomon is an allegory setting forth the relation of God and His people under the figure of a marriage. It is explained by the Jews as descriptive of the union of Jehovah and Israel, and by others as that of Christ and His Church, or Christ and the individual believer. It was

probably composed by Solomon at an early period of his life.

The prophetical books are commonly divided into the books of the major and minor prophets, the first-named including only Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Isaiah is the most frequently quoted in the New Testament, and special interest is just now drawn to him because of the attempt to prove that there were two Isaiahs. To the second, or Deutero-Isaiah, as he is sometimes called, is ascribed the last division of the book, chapters xl. to lxvi.; but the arguments so far presented are not sufficient to overthrow the traditional opinion of its authorship. The other of the major prophets over whose genuineness controversy has arisen, is Daniel. He differs from the other prophets in treating more of Gentile than Jewish history, and it will surprise some to learn that one of the objections to the authenticity of his book is the accuracy of detail in certain of his prophecies. His allusions to Antiochus Epiphanes, a king of Syria about 170 B.C., are

so minute as to raise the suspicion in some minds that they must have been written after the event! But the opposite can be shown very satisfactorily, so that the objection, instead of an argument against the book, becomes its strongest confirmation.

The minor prophets have thus far escaped the dissecting knife of the critics rather more than other portions of the Old Testament, with, perhaps, one or two exceptions. They may be classified as follows: (1) Those who prophesied in Israel—Amos, Hosea and Micah; (2) those who prophesied in Judah—Joel, Habbakuk and Zephaniah; (3) those whose message was addressed to a Gentile nation—Jonah, Nahum and Obadiah; and (4) those who prophesied in Judah after the captivity—Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. It is well known that objection is offered to the historicity of Jonah because of the miracle it records. But to the humble believer it is sufficient to reply that there is no intimation elsewhere in the Bible as to its allegorical character, and that our blessed

Lord seems very clearly to attest its actuality by His references to the prophet in Matthew xii. 39-41.

So far as history records, all these books of the Old Testament have always sustained the same relationship to each other which now exists, except that in the Jewish canon two or more books, like Samuel, Kings and some others, are counted as one, making the total twenty-two as against our thirty-nine. But otherwise there is no difference. We have already referred to the disposition supposed to have been made of the earlier historical books; but that the earlier prophets were subsequently added to that collection also, seems apparent from the fact that they were known to and quoted by the later prophets (Dan. ix. 2; Zech. vii. 12). Though the temple was destroyed, and the nation carried into captivity about 588 B.C., yet there is no evidence that the copies of the sacred oracles were destroyed; while after that period an order of scribes arose, whose specific duty was to transcribe the



books, so that at the time of the advent of Christ, they were multiplied in great numbers. Tradition holds that the canon as we now have it was completed within fifty years of the rebuilding of the temple, by a company of devout men known as the Great Synagogue, including Ezra and the later prophets.

In view of the subject of the next chapter, it may not be inappropriate to close the present one with the following quotation from Dr. R. S. Storrs—part of his farewell address as president of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, received by that distinguished body with the heartiest expressions of approval. He said:

“Whatever particular criticism may be made concerning writings or portions of writings in the Scriptures, as to their authority, as to their proper place in the sacred canon, as to the authorship of them, as to the time at which they were written, these criticisms or critical inquiries no

more touch the substance of the Scripture than a minute botanical analysis touches the splendor of gardens or the grandeur of forests, or than the deep-sea soundings efface the blue from the surface of the ocean, or stay the swing of its tremendous tides."

#### QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What question is back of the authenticity of the Bible?
2. What view of its growth is given in this chapter?
3. How may the Old Testament be divided?
4. Give the history of the historical books.
5. Name the poetical books.
6. How does the Hebrew differ from English poetry?
7. Give the history of the poetical books.
8. What kind of a man speaks in Ecclesiastes?
9. Name the major prophets.
10. Classify the minor prophets.
11. What two arguments make for the historicity of Jonah?
12. What difference exists between the Jewish canon and ours?
13. What proof exists for the authenticity of the earlier prophets?
14. What shows that the books were not destroyed at the captivity?

15. When was the canon presumably completed, and by whom?

16. How far, in the judgment of Dr. Storrs, is the substance of Scripture affected by recent criticism?

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE HIGHER CRITICISM OF THE PENTATEUCH

**I**N the previous chapter we stated the traditional opinion as to the manner in which the particular books came into being and were preserved from the time of Moses to that of Christ. But in recent times this opinion has been antagonised by a class of scholars known as Higher Critics. Higher Criticism is so-called to distinguish it from Lower Criticism, which deals only with the questions of manuscripts, versions, etc., through which the books have been handed down to us. Higher Criticism builds on the results thus obtained, studying the text as literature, seeking to determine its original sources, scrutinizing in detail the way in which it was built up. The first two chapters were in the nature of Lower Criticism, while the third approached more nearly that designated as the Higher. It is, of

course, a very useful and honorable branch of literary science which may be appreciated even when all its conclusions are not assented to.

The chief point of attack at present is the Hexateuch, or the first six books of the Bible, which Higher Criticism maintains are not to be ascribed in their present condition to Moses and Joshua as commonly supposed, but instead to several authors, redactors or editors of different periods, down to, and including, the time of Ezra, about 450 to 430 B.C. It would be tedious to name all the reasons assigned for this opinion, but two or three may suffice.

Confining ourselves solely to the Pentateuch, the critics say that because God is sometimes there alluded to as Elohim (translated God), and sometimes Jehovah (translated LORD), it indicates that at least two different documents were used in its compilation, each distinguished by the respective name. They notice again that certain statutes and regulations in the

Pentateuch, especially with reference to the Tabernacle worship, were not observed in the history of Israel for hundreds of years afterwards, suggesting that their composition could not have taken place until about that time. Furthermore, they think they discover certain laws in one part of the Pentateuch contradictory to certain other laws in other parts, as for example, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. These considerations and others, lead them to conclude that the Pentateuch was a growth or development, corresponding to the similar growth or development of Israel as a nation from the conquest of Canaan under Joshua to the post-Babylonian period of Ezra. They teach that Moses left a nucleus of legislation which subsequent authors, unknown, some in Judea, and others in Israel, some in Solomon's time, some in that of Jeroboam II., some in that of Josiah, and finally Ezra, supplemented, amplified, edited, etc., as the need required, until the Pentateuch assumed its present literary form.

There are two classes of these Critics, the radical and the more conservative. While the first, like the German Wellhausen, seem bent on destroying the Bible altogether as a supernatural revelation, the second, like Professor Briggs, of our own country, admit and even insist that these later authors and editors were as truly inspired for their work as Moses was for his, and hence are to be accepted as of like authority. The following from Dr. W. Sanday, Professor of Exegesis, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, an authority on the side of the Higher Critics, is in point. He says: "My experience is that criticism leads straight up to the supernatural and not away from it. I mean that if we let the Bible writers speak for themselves, they will tell us, in quite unequivocal terms, that they wrote by divine prompting. The spoken word of prophet and apostle was put in their mouths by God, and the written word was only the spoken word committed to writing, or on the same footing with it.

\* \* \* \* We are willing to explain

them, to set them in their proper place in space and time, to give them their true position in the development of God's purposes, but we refuse to explain them away." The quotation is employed not in defence of the conclusions of the Higher Critics, but from a sense of fairness to let them be heard in their own words. And then too, such utterances as these serve as a buffer to neutralize the opposition of the skeptic who declares that the researches of Higher Criticism have undermined the authority of the Bible altogether. Such of course is not the case, the Higher Critics themselves being the judges.

From one point of view, of course, it matters little what human author wrote a given book in the Bible, or whether it was written by several in conjunction; whether the information was obtained in this way or that, provided in the last analysis it is seen to have come from God. And in the present cases we might let the Higher Critics have it all their own way if the Bible itself did not seem to refute them.



For example, (I), The Pentateuch claims to have been written by Moses (see Ex. xvii. 14; xxiv. 3, 4, 7; xxxiv. 27; Numbers xxxiii. 2; Deuteronomy v. 31; xxxi. 9, 22, 26). Higher Criticism says that these passages only indicate that Moses wrote so much of the Pentateuch as that to which they refer, and the remainder was gathered by a later hand from some other source. But what source? is the question. When we consider that these Mosaic portions are an intrinsic part of the whole, and that no historic evidence exists that they were ever separate from the other parts, the burden of proof certainly lies upon the Higher Critics to make their position clearer than it is. The book of Deuteronomy, for example, is claimed by them to have originated chiefly in the age of Josiah, about 623 B.C., but Professor Bissell of the Hartford Theological Seminary, has shown that by actual enumeration fifteen-sixteenths of that book is put directly into the mouth of the law-giver himself and represented as spoken by him. "Out of

nearly a thousand verses there are but sixty that are not in the form of direct address, that is, that do not purport to be the word-for-word utterances of Moses himself."

(II) The other books of the Old Testament corroborate the Mosaic claims of the Pentateuch. They contain many references to "The Law," "The Book of the Law," "The Law of Moses," and "The Book of the Law of Moses." It is maintained by the Critics that only the last-named applies to the whole Pentateuch as we now possess it, but even so, the last-named was in existence four hundred years before Ezra (II. Kings xiv. 6). Moreover, as many others have pointed out, such historical psalms as lxxviii., cv., cvi., are filled with meaningless expressions if they do not refer to any earlier composition such as the Pentateuch. It is also true that the services of the sanctuary in the periods of David and Solomon have no other basis for their existence if it be not traced to the same origin.

(III) The Testimony of Jesus Christ corroborates the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (see Mark xii. 26; Luke xxiv. 44; John v. 46, 47). The Critics say these allusions of the Saviour to the writings of Moses should be interpreted in accordance with custom. Anonymous books are frequently named after the chief character in them, and as Moses is the chief character in the Pentateuch it came to be called after him. They say that is all Jesus meant by referring to his authorship. But a question arises just here as to the view held by the Jews to whom Jesus spake. Did they not firmly believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch? Was that not the common opinion in Palestine in the time of Christ? If Jesus, then, allowed the people to remain in ignorance of its real author, or rather if He confirmed them in a false opinion about its author, was He doing right? The Critics answer that Jesus was not obliged to correct all the errors of His contemporaries, and one American author seems to think

He was unable to do it. He says: "It was clearly beyond the power even of divinity, in three short years, to sweep the Jewish mind free of all error and superstition!" Some of the critics indeed, boldly advance another theory, and maintain that on this subject Christ, because of the voluntary limitations of His nature, knew no better than His contemporaries. He too, believed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, but was mistaken like the rest of them! In the last analysis therefore this whole question of the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible seems to rise or fall pretty much with that other question of greater import, "What think ye of Christ?"

For our own part we believe that very reasonable explanations can be given for most of the difficulties pointed out by the Higher Criticism. We believe that Moses may have compiled his work, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, from other documents which contained the different names of God, and that God may have

had a wise and gracious purpose in referring to Himself in different circumstances by different names. We believe the fact that the laws of Moses were not observed in the earlier history of Israel is not more an evidence of the non-existence of those laws than of the disobedience and idolatry of the people, and we are inclined to think that the pleadings and warnings of all the prophets bear out this view. We believe that certain laws thought to be contradictory are really supplementary, and that a right conception of the place and purpose of Leviticus as compared with Deuteronomy, for example, will substantiate the statement. Forty years elapsed between the writing of those two books; one was written at the beginning of the wilderness journey, the other at its close; one was technical for the priests, the other popular for the people, and in the very nature of the case one might omit much found in the other, or in touching upon it might do so in a somewhat different manner.

On the whole, one of the Higher Crit-

ics himself sums up the view of this matter clearly, when he says: "With the exception of a few possible later insertions, and of certain minor alterations, due to an occasional revision of the text, 'the Torah' (e.g., the law), has probably descended to us very little changed." The difference between this Critic and ourselves is a matter of date. His *terminus a quo* is 432 B.C., ours about a thousand years earlier. His later redactor is Ezra, ours is Moses himself.

It was hinted in the previous chapter, that the same principles of criticism were being applied to other books of the Old Testament, and it is possible, in consequence, that we may be obliged to change our opinion, if we have one, as to the way in which they obtained their present literary form. But there is nothing in this to shake the conviction of any true Christian as to the divine authority of those books. The great bulwark against that, as we shall see more positively further on, is the example and testimony of Jesus

Christ. It should not be forgotten that as the books now are, so were they in His day, and that He thus quoted and identified them as the Word of God.

It might be well to add also, that other literary productions of a remote time are subject to the same kind of criticism as the Bible—Homer's poems, for example, in which case a re-action is taking place. For nearly a century critics have insisted on a documentary origin for those poems, and have even denied the existence of a historic Troy. But more and more in our day is the old traditional view returning to favor. One of the most radical of these critics is now obliged to confess that "the literary sins committed in dissecting Homer have been great, owing to a one-sided and all too acute system of analysis. And this has been the case even in the best works on the subject." A similar conviction about the dissection of the Old Testament is now taking hold of some of that class hitherto concerned in the operation.

## QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. How would you distinguish between Higher and Lower Criticism?
2. What is the contention of Higher Criticism about the Hexateuch?
3. Name two or three grounds for it.
4. What theory is advanced as to the origin of the Pentateuch?
5. How would you distinguish between the Higher Critics?
6. Can any of their conclusions be maintained consistently with the infallibility of the Bible?
7. How does the Bible appear to contradict their hypothesis?
8. How would you state the testimony of Jesus Christ?
9. How would you explain some of the difficulties presented by the Higher Critics?
10. Is Higher Criticism known in other literature?
11. What re-action is at present taking place, and how does it affect the Bible?



## CHAPTER V.

### THE GROWTH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

**I**N considering the question at the head of this chapter, we begin with the proposition that the canonicity of a book of the New Testament depends on its having been written by an apostle, or received as of divine authority in the apostolic age. As early as A.D. 325 this was certified to by the whole Church as true of the books of the New Testament we now possess. At that date the first general council of the Church was held in the city of Nice, France, and one of its important acts was the setting forth of a catalogue or list of the accepted books to that effect. But this was not the first catalogue by any means, numerous others having been prepared by individuals of importance in the Church very much earlier. Eusebius, known as the Father of Church History, prepared one about 300 A.D. Origen, the most illustrious Christian scholar of the preceding

century, and others of the Christian Fathers, as they are called, either prepared catalogues, or in one way or another certified to the different books all the way back to the time of John himself, the last of the twelve apostles, who died about the year 100. These fathers do not in every case refer to all the books, some omitting this and others that, according to circumstances, but a comparison of all their testimonies made it possible for the Church in her collective capacity at the date named (325), to state authoritatively that the books we now have were from the beginning received as canonical. ●

The Gospels at first existed only in oral form. The apostles and disciples who "went everywhere preaching the Word," related simply the story of what Jesus said and did. But, to avoid exaggeration and erroneous tradition, it became necessary before their decease to write down the story for transmission to later times. This was done in the case of the first three Gospels as early as A.D. 60 to 65, and in

that of the fourth about a generation, i.e., thirty years, later. The first three are sometimes called the synoptics, because when combined they present a general and harmonized view of Christ's life, and were written, so it is thought, to meet the special requirements of the three representative people of that day, respectively, the Jews, Romans and Greeks. As the Church grew and developed however, deep questions began to present themselves for settlement, and certain errors and heresies to arise, especially concerning the Person and work of Christ, which it was reserved for the fourth Gospel to answer and counteract. Hence this Gospel is the profoundest and most spiritual of the four. This is not to say that the sayings and doings of Jesus which it records were unknown to the other three evangelists, but only that the time was not ripe for their general promulgation. It is John's Gospel more than any of the others which lays emphasis on the Deity of Christ and the union of the divine and human natures in His Person, as well as the

sacrificial character of His atonement. For these reasons, as might be supposed, its genuineness is the most furiously attacked by the destructive critics, as they are called, who have tried to show that it was written by some other John than the apostle, and ascribed it to a presbyter of that name in the second century. But as Dean Farrar has said, in "The Messages of the Books," "The objections have been met, point by point, and nothing can invalidate the mass of external and internal evidence in its favor . . . from the multitudes of conspiring possibilities derived from the most opposite quarters."

A most interesting witness to the genuineness of John's Gospel has only recently come to light in a document known as "Tatian's Diatessaron." This is really a harmony of the four Gospels, prepared by a scholar named Tatian about the middle of the second century, showing conclusively that the work of John must have been well known prior to that time. But while early writers had often referred to this

Diatessaron, no copies of it could be found, so that the critics before mentioned had grown bold to say that its existence was a farce. But within only fifteen years two copies of it have been discovered, written in the Arabic tongue, one in the Vatican Library at Rome and the other in Egypt, from which a Latin translation was published in honor of the Pope's jubilee. The cause of their mysterious seclusion for all these years is the fact that they were what scholars call palimpsests, i.e., MSS. on which one text is written over another. The cost of writing material was very dear in early days, and a chemical was employed by which one writing was removed to afford a clear surface for another. Tatian's work was thus put out of the way for a later composition of a different character and lesser value. But in process of time the effect of the chemical was lost, and the old writing reappeared, whose deciphering on the part of certain experts produced the results just spoken of. Thus does this remarkable discovery demolish the hypothe-

sis of the critics and show the wisdom of God in reserving the provision for the need and preparing it for the day and the hour.

When we reach the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul, we meet with books as to whose canonicity there was never any doubt. In the case of the first named, the use of the pronouns "we" and "us" indicates the author to have been present at the scenes recorded, while a comparison of chapter i. 1, 2, with Luke i. 1-4, shows both books to have been written by the same person. Both are addressed to Theophilus, and in the one there is a specific allusion to the other as its supplement or continuation. As the record closes with the second year of Paul's imprisonment at Rome, the conclusion is drawn that the publication of the book occurred about that time, or A.D. 63. <sup>53</sup>

The canonicity of Paul's epistles is established somewhat like this: 1. Others were associated with him as witnesses to their composition (I. Thess. i. 1; II. Thess. i. 1; Rom. xvi. 22, etc.). 2. His signature

was attached to them (II. Thess. iii. 17; I. Cor. xvi. 21; Col. iv. 18; Gal. vi. 11, R. V.). 3. They were transmitted to the churches by private messengers, who formed a connecting link with their author (Rom. xvi. 1; Col. iv. 7, 8). 4. In at least nine instances they were addressed to public bodies and hence read in public assemblies, where large numbers were interested in examining the evidence of their genuineness (II. Cor. i. 13; Col. iv. 16; I. Thess. v. 27). 5. They are borne witness to by Peter (II. Peter iii. 15, 16). This testimony applies practically to all the epistles of Paul except Hebrews, about which there has been some doubt because the name of the author is absent from it. Hebrews has sometimes been attributed to Timothy, Barnabas, or Apollos, but the prevailing judgment assigns it to the great apostle to the Gentiles because of its similarity to his other writings in many points of style, phraseology and personal notices, and because of the concurrent opinion of

many of the Christian writers of the second and third centuries.

The Catholic or General Epistles as they are usually called, with perhaps the exception of I. Peter and I. John, were disputed for a time and found their way into the Canon at a later period than the others. The reasons for this are easy to understand. The authors for the most part do not subscribe themselves as apostles, but as "servants" or "elders," and this for a while created doubt. Neither were they addressed to public bodies of Christians, but to believers or private individuals, so that fewer were interested in the examination and transmission of the evidence concerning them, and that evidence itself as to its external character was necessarily limited. But the dispute and delay in these cases only show the care evinced in the preparation of the Canon, and strengthen conviction as to the genuineness of the whole.

As further witness to this care the following facts are of interest. In the first



place, numerous catalogues of the books were published from time to time, thirteen appearing within a period of about 180 years, between the close of the second and the opening of the fourth centuries. In the second place, the Christian fathers sometimes made long journeys to Palestine and resided there for lengthened periods while sifting evidence, just as similar students and critics do in our own time. In the third place forgeries were treated with the greatest rigor. For example, the Church historians tell of an Asiatic Presbyter who set forth a book in the second century under the name of an apostle, and who, when the fraud was discovered, was deposed from the ministry, while the whole affair was communicated to the churches. Finally, it should be kept in mind that the different books came before the churches not only separately, but at such intervals as afforded time for deliberate and independent investigation in each case. The letter to the Romans was conveyed thither by Phoebe (xvi. 1), who

was on a personal business trip of some kind from Corinth to that city. She was no doubt well known to many persons in both localities to whom her testimony as to the Pauline origin of the letter would be conclusive. By and by, as we may imagine, a copy of that letter was sent by the church of Rome to some other church, accompanied by the evidence they possessed of its genuineness. The church thus accommodated would in its turn transmit to Rome a copy of an epistle in its possession, and thus, while for a period certain churches may have possessed more books than others, yet as we have seen in an earlier chapter, all must have been known to the greater part of the whole Church by the middle or close of the second century. It was to these facts that the Council of Nice testified, A.D. 325, and thus it may be said, did the New Testament grow.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. Upon what does the canonicity of a book of the New Testament depend?
2. When, and where, was the canonicity of

the New Testament certified by the whole Church?

3. Name some of the fathers who had previously prepared catalogues?

4. What name is given to the first three Gospels, and when, presumably, were they written?

5. When and why was the fourth Gospel written?

6. Give the history of Tatian's Diatessaron.

7. How is the canonicity of Paul's epistles established?

8. Give some of the reasons why the Catholic epistles were for a time disputed?

9. Name some additional testimony to the care evinced in the preparation of the canon?



**PART SECOND**

**THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE**



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE PROVEN BY ITS HISTORICAL EXISTENCE

**H**ITHERTO we have considered the authenticity of the Bible, but a book may be authentic and not true. Hence it is now necessary to ask whether a book as to whose authorship and genuineness there is no question is at the same time credible. Is it worthy of reliance as to its statements of fact? Is the Bible true?

To prove the truth of the Bible it is only necessary to prove that of the New Testament, for it abundantly establishes the Old (Matthew v. 17; Luke xxiv. 44; John x. 35; Romans iii. 31; Hebrews i. 1, 2). And to prove the truth of the New Testament we may limit ourselves to the Gospels, for if the facts they record are substantiated by competent testimony, there is nothing in the Acts or Epistles whose credibility need be questioned.

Two lines of evidence are open to the

inquirer, from each of which in this and the subsequent chapter we shall select an illustration or two. The first is known/as the external or historical, and the second as the internal or moral evidence. The external includes (1) the need of a divine revelation in the darkened condition of the race, (2) the existence of the Bible itself as a historical fact, (3) the miracles wrought in its attestation, and (4) the historical effects it has produced. The internal includes (1) the moral character of its teachings, (2) the unity and harmony of its several parts, and beyond all, (3) the conception of the Person and character of Jesus Christ it reveals. In this chapter reference will be made particularly to numbers 1 and 2 of the class first named.

I. Given a personal God, infinite in holiness, justice, power, mercy and truth, and such a specific revelation of His will to man as that represented by the Bible is a foregone conclusion. This is true for several reasons:—

In the first place, it is true because man



is otherwise ignorant of God as the result of his own sin. Behold the Chaldeans, the most ancient people of whom we have any record, adoring the sun, moon and stars; the Egyptians, whose land was the cradle of the arts and sciences, worshipping bulls, and dogs, and cats, and rats, and reptiles and beetles; the Romans, whose temples were erected to all the passions, fears and diseases to which humanity is heir; and the educated Hindus of our own period adoring three hundred and thirty millions of gods in the form of almost everything under heaven!

But in the second place, man is not only ignorant of God, but for that very reason also ignorant of the nature and destiny of his own soul. Even the great Socrates could only say, "I hope I am now going to good men, though this I would not take upon me peremptorily to assert." Cicero, renowned for his treatises on immortality, can only speak of the several opinions concerning it, and add, "Which of these is true, God alone knows, and which is

most probable is a very great question." These philosophers and their pupils may be said to have had some hope of immortality, but the gloomy anticipations of the many are illustrated in the following epitaph from an ancient tomb, quoted in Horne's "Introduction to the Holy Scriptures:"

"Alas, the tender herbs and flowery tribes,  
Tho' crushed by winter's unrelenting hand,  
Revive and rise when vernal zephyrs call.  
But we, the brave, the mighty and the wise,  
Bloom, flourish, fade and fall—and then suc-  
ceeds

A long, long, silent, dark, oblivious sleep;  
A sleep which no propitious Power dispels,  
Nor changing seasons, nor revolving years."

And then in the third place, this uncertainty concerning such fundamental truths, has been very naturally attended with corresponding effects both in principle and practice. Men called in question God's goodness, if there were a God, and doubted whether there was any essential difference between vice and virtue. The duty of love to one's neighbor failed to be in-

culcated, pride was esteemed the greatest incentive to heroic action, suicide was commended, theft openly permitted, children abandoned to death, women treated as slaves, and gratification of the sensual appetites openly practiced and taught.

And then finally, side by side with this general depravity, because of the absence of the Bible, there is to be named as one of the causes calling for such a revelation, the almost universal craving on man's part to obtain it. In his search he has run after all sorts of omens, auguries, and oracles. Every heathen lawgiver of note professed to hold communion with heaven, and as another expresses it, the abundance of quack doctors is conclusive proof of existence of disease and the need of a true physician." "We will wait" said Plato, "for one, be it a god or god-inspired man, to teach us our religious duties, and as Athene, in Homer, says to Diomed, 'Take away the darkness from our eyes.'"

This yearning to know God was not the result of unaccountable caprice, but a prin-

ciple implanted by God Himself in the human breast, who, when He makes anything adapted for something else, always makes that something else to answer the adaptation. As these considerations therefore show us man's need of such a revelation as the Bible, they carry with them as well the conviction that the Bible itself is from God.

II. The truth of the Bible, however, is proven not only by the need of it, but by the fact of its existence itself. Confining ourselves merely to the Gospels let us consider four things:

1. The early period of their publication.
2. The circumstantiality of their contents.
3. The sincerity of their authors.
4. The testimony of their opponents.

As to the first point, it is a remark of the great Dr. Channing, that "a history received by a people as true, not only gives us the testimony of the writer, but that of the nation among whom it finds credit." This then is certainly the case with refer-

ence to the Gospels, which were published (the first three at least) within thirty years of the ascension of Christ, in the period when the events occurred, and among the people to whom they were said to be known. As these latter had every opportunity as well as desire to examine the evidence, Bishop McIlvaine must certainly be justified in saying, that only insane men would have published such books under such circumstances had they been untrue.

As to the second point, they are full of minute details, time, places and persons being designated with the greatest particularity, as if there were no fear of investigation, and for that matter, no necessity for it. Observe how the most marvelous events are treated without the slightest indication of astonishment, even the raising of the dead! See the deepest mysteries referred to, as for example our Lord's utterances about Himself, and yet no attempt at explanation! Do not these features show that the events recorded were too well known to be capable of doubt?

Are they not an evidence that the reporters are merely recording public facts well understood by all as having actually taken place?

As to the third point, did not the authors submit to the extremest suffering and death for the testimony they bore? And did these things come upon them unawares, or had they not been forewarned that they were coming? (Matt. xxiv. 9; John xvi. 2; Acts xii. 1-3; I. Cor. iv. 9-14). Will it be said that they were deluded? But were they not men regarded in other respects as possessing good judgment and sound sense? And had they not been with Jesus during the whole course of His public ministry?

As to the fourth point, we find that many who rejected the religion of the Gospels nevertheless admitted the facts on which it was based. Celsus, a noted infidel of the second century, Porphyry of the third, and Julian of the fourth did this. They did not deny the miracles, for example, but sought to account for them on oth-

er grounds. Compare also Matthew xii. 24; xxvii. 54; and John iii. 1, 2; vii. 31, 46. Moreover, heathen and Jewish writers of the period, though they do not refer to the Gospels by name, nevertheless confirm their narratives incidentally. Josephus does this in his "Annals of the Jews," Tacitus in his Roman history, Pliny in his letters as the Roman governor of Bithynia, and Suetonius in his Biographical Sketches, as well as others who need not be named. What stronger evidence need we require that the existence of the Gospels themselves, under these circumstances, is an incontrovertible testimony to their truth?

Perhaps it is not altogether pertinent to the present contention, and yet it is not out of place, to say that the continued existence of this Book in all the centuries is a strong additional confirmation of its truth. To use a common figure, it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers. Every little while some one attempts to upset it and finds it a solid cube of gran-

ite. The geologist's pick, the astronomer's telescope, the archeologist's spade, and the biologist's microscope have had their turn. Voltaire and Edward Gibbon and Tom Paine have tried their hand at it. Barrows reminds us that Darwin's "Origin of Species," 1859, was thought to have sounded its death-knell, but the most fruitful third of a century the Bible has ever known followed the publication of that great work. It is since then that men have offered five hundred dollars for a copy of that book in the revised version prior to the day of its general publication, and that the whole of it (the New Testament) was telegraphed from New York to Chicago to be printed in advance of the mail! Has any other book such a history? And must not a book with such a history be true?

#### QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What is meant when we ask, "Is the Bible true"?
2. To what portion of the Bible may our proof be confined, and why?
3. How many lines of evidence may be employed, and how are they described?



4. What is included in each?
5. What reasons have we to expect such a revelation as the Bible from a Personal God?
6. What four historical facts go to establish the truth of the Gospels?
7. Name some opponents whose testimony nevertheless sustains the truth of the Gospels?
8. What recent phenomenon goes to corroborate the foregoing argument?

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE PROVEN BY THE CHARACTER OF ITS CONTENTS

**I**N the previous chapter we considered the need of such a revelation as the Bible in the darkened condition of the human race, and the fact of its existence as a historical reality. At present we advance a step and open the Bible itself. What does it contain? What is its nature? And what the bearing of its contents and nature on the question of its truth?

We find the Bible to be a good as well as wonderful book—so wonderful as to preclude a simply human origin, and so good as to stamp it as divine.

In demonstration of this consider in the first place, the structure of the Bible. In this respect it is unparalleled in the world's history. It consists of sixty-six books, written by forty different authors, living in different parts of the world and scattered over a period of sixteen centuries. They

are of the most varied intellectual capacities and characteristics—statesmen and shepherds, priests and prophets, farmers and fishermen. Not one is distinguished for philosophical attainments, unless it be Moses or Paul, and yet they rise to the loftiest theme of human thought, exhibiting at every stage of progress in the Book a uniform plan and a constant unanimity of testimony and doctrine.

This unity is described by A. T. Pier-son, D.D., as consisting of at least eight distinct particulars. In the first place, it is structural, as seen in the fact that each Testament is built up on an architectural plan and the same plan; i.e., first comes history, then doctrine based upon it, then prophecy growing out of it. In the second place, it is historic, for the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is simply the history of God. In the third place, it is prophetic, for there is but one center to its prophecy, and that is the kingdom of the King. "To Him give all the prophets witness. Out of the 666 gen-

eral prophecies in the Old Testament, one-half at least refer particularly to the first or second coming of the Messiah and meet only in Him. The unity is therefore personal as well as prophetic since Christ is the center of all, not only the prophecies, but also the rites and ceremonies meeting only in Him. It is also symbolic, there being a correspondence throughout in the use of symbols as to form, color and number. It is didactic, because in the entire range and scope of the teachings of the Bible there is not a single inconsistency, contradiction or adulteration. And finally, for our present purpose, this unity is organic, i.e., all parts of the Bible are necessary to the whole, all are necessary to complete each other, and all are pervaded by one life principle.

The more one dwells upon these facts the more is he impressed with their wonderful nature, the more does he come to see that one mind, and that a Divine Mind, must have been behind all these writers in all these centuries, that the plan

and its operation must have been His alone, and that, as the Bible itself says, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

But consider, in the next place, not only the phenomenal structure, but the equally marvelous knowledge of the Bible. We refer particularly to its scientific knowledge. There are those who are pleased to say that science contradicts the Bible. But how far is this from being true! The Bible is rather the most scientific Book in the whole world. To be sure, it does not profess to teach science, for it was written with a different purpose, and when it alludes to scientific matters it does so in terms that are popular rather than technical. But scientists do this themselves when addressing the multitude. On the other hand, the Bible contains references to many scientific facts otherwise unknown to human investigators for centuries after they were recorded. To quote Dr. McCaul, of Scotland: "Moses relates how God created the heavens and the

earth at an indefinitely remote period of time before the earth became the habitation of man, and geology has lately discovered the existence of a long-prehistoric period. Moses declares the earth to have been covered with water, desolate and empty, and geology now corroborates him by saying that the primitive globe was a uniform ocean, and that there was a long period when neither plant nor animal could live. Moses asserts that the earth existed before the sun was given as a luminary, and modern science proposes a theory which explains it. Moses describes the process of creation as gradual, and names the order in which things appeared, and the study of nature now enables us to arrive independently at the same conclusion."

The book of Ecclesiastes is especially suggestive in scientific allusions. In chapter i. verse 6, we have a statement about the air currents flowing from the north pole to the equator and so back again, which our signal service has only recently

ascertained and begun to illustrate on the charts. How did Solomon learn this 2,700 years ago? In the very next verse we have quite as astounding a description of the return of water by evaporation from the sea to the springs. In chapter xii. 6, is an exact, though poetic representation of the circulation of the blood.

To pass from Ecclesiastes to the Psalms, consider the allusion in Psalm lxxv. 8, which literally rendered—"Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to sing"—is a beautiful fore-statement of our present knowledge concerning the relation of vibration to light. And what of Psalm cxxxix. 15, where the elements of our bodies are traced beyond their parental source? Scientists now maintain that all the elements of nature flow in and out of organisms, and that every atom at present existing in a given human body may once have been in plants, and earth, and sea; and this seems to be precisely what the Psalmist hints at in the passage spoken of.

The prophets will repay examination for utterances of the same kind. Jeremiah, for example (xxxiii. 22), tells us that "the hosts of heaven cannot be numbered," but it is only in our own period that men have come to regard this statement not a poetic fancy, but an absolute fact, borne witness to by a modern telescope. These illustrations, and countless more that might be named, testify to a Divine Mind behind the human writers and to the truth of what they wrote.

Consider thirdly, in addition to the knowledge, the exceptional teachings of Bible. These may be classed under the two general heads of religion and ethics, and include the teachings about God, about man, sin, redemption, the future life, practical moral conduct and kindred topics. On all these fundamental themes the teaching of the Bible is not only new, but infinitely superior to anything theretofore known to the human mind.

The way to prove this is by comparing these teachings with those of the sages,



philosophers and poets of paganism in the past and also in our own day. One or two concrete illustrations must suffice :

For instance, when Israel, under Solomon, was in possession of the sacred oracles and worshipping in the Temple at Jerusalem, Homer, the greatest of epic poets, was singing the ballads of the Iliad and Odyssey in Greece. But Zeus, the god he sang about, was only a magnified man. His immortality was physical. Let him fail to feed on ambrosia or nectar and he would die. This was certainly true of the lesser gods who sprung from him, and who had their fixed abodes and their occasional haunts. These gods were ignorant of some of the matters that most concerned them—they could be deceived and thwarted by other gods and even men, and were, as to their character, not only destitute of the qualities of holiness and love, but pitiless, adulterous and unfaithful. That is a sad and all-revealing line in which the poet makes the gods decree,

"That worthless man shall live in pain and woe,  
While they themselves are griefless."

Homer was not a professional theologian, as were some of his successors whose speculations have been more refined and subtle, but who so far as absolute truth is concerned have been as far away from it as he. Pantheism, the flower of pagan philosophy, simply confounds the Creator with creation, making Him the impersonal soul of the universe, and furnishing occasion for the 330,000,000 gods of India today. Dualism, another philosophic concept of the deity, makes a god of matter and one of spirit, whose moral attributes are not essentially different from those of the deities described by the Grecian bard.

We will not pursue our comparison into the region of the related truths, whose character may easily be judged by the foregoing, and by what was said in the preceding chapter on the need of a revelation in the darkened condition of the human race. But the question is sometimes asked whether there are no scattered frag-

ments of truth in the heathen writings as we know them today—Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism for example? Certainly there are, but they are fragments and nothing more; flickerings of the divine light which mankind once possessed (Rom. i. 18-25) but whose radiance was lost when “professing themselves to be wise they became fools.”

To speak more particularly of Mohammedanism. It comes the nearest of any of the world-religions to Christianity, and took its rise, not before, but hundreds of years afterwards, having the advantage of being able to copy not only from Judaism but from the New Testament itself. But how Mohammedanism testifies by contrast to the divinity of the sacred oracles! How the teachings of the Koran stamp it as a wisdom that is natural, animal and demoniacal (Jas. iii. 15), in comparison with the Word of God! To take only its teachings about the future life:—Faithful Mohammedans will be raised from the dead in their own bodies, we are told,

and in various degrees of honor according to their merit, but unbelievers will be raised like apes, or swine, or if in human bodies, then maimed and horribly distorted. In Paradise, believers will possess an animal nature like the present one, be delighted with the pleasures of the palate, and for that matter with the gratification of all the sensual appetites. One may easily imagine the nature of the moral code accompanying such religious teaching, which Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, for more than twenty years a missionary in Turkey, summarises as "a system of slavery, polygamy and death." Further comment is unnecessary.

Finally, consider in addition to the teachings themselves their adaptation to human need. We speak not of man's physical, intellectual or social need, though in each of these respects the divinity of the Bible is seen, but more especially his spiritual need—the earnest yearnings of his soul. Is it a question of present duty? Does he cry, How may a man be just with

God? Does he look for the way of peace? Is he seeking the source of strength against his inward and outward foes? Does he want a Being to love, whose wisdom he can confide in, whose friendship he can trust, whose power he can invoke? Is it the future he seeks to penetrate, the secret of immortality he craves? What book in all the world can supply these needs or comply with these demands except the book which Sir Walter Scott described as the only one?

But the Bible is not merely adapted to every spiritual need, but every spiritual need of every class of men, both young and old, and ignorant and learned. It speaks to the "child-heart which comes back to earth with each new generation," and keeps ahead of the most disciplined mind at the same time. Must not that Book be more than human which can be taught to a primary class in Sunday school, and which the intellect of a scientist like Faraday, a statesman like Gladstone and a scholar like John Henry New-

man cannot exhaust? It is adapted, moreover, to every need of every class of every age, and that is still more wonderful. It deals as accurately with the maxims and manners of the nineteenth century of the Christian era as with those of the earliest ages of human history. It mirrors the London, or Paris, or New York of today as vividly, and with the same precision and faithfulness as the Athens, or Tyre, or Jerusalem of long ago. And it is adapted not only to every age, but to every nation. The Arabian has his Koran, the Hindu his Vedas, the Persian his Zend-Avesta, and these books instruct even if they cannot satisfy them. But no sooner does the Mohammedan, the Buddhist or the Parsee come to apprehend the contents of the Bible than he too acknowledges its transcendent superiority to his own and is ready to submit himself to its Author as unto God.

To quote an illustration which the writer of "Will the Old Book Stand?" has made familiar: When Columbus discovered the

river Orinoco, someone said he had found an island. "Oh, no," he replied, "that mighty torrent must drain the waters of a continent!" So this Book cannot come merely from the empty hearts of impostors, liars and deceivers, but from the eternal depths of divine wisdom, truth and love. It is the transcript of the Divine Mind, the unfolding of the divine purpose and the revelation of the divine will.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What two things are true of the contents of the Bible?
2. What four facts illustrate this?
3. What seven features of the unity of the Bible are mentioned?
4. Give some illustrations of the scientific knowledge of the Bible.
5. How would you classify the teachings of the Bible?
6. What illustrations can you give of their superiority to all others?
7. How far is the Bible adapted to human needs?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE PROVEN BY THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

**W**E have opened the Bible, examined its contents, and in our last chapter spoken of its structure, its knowledge, its teachings and its adaptation to the deepest needs of man, as a four-square proof of its divinity. But the most wonderful thing it contains, and the most incontestable witness to its heavenly origin is its conception of the person of Jesus Christ. It is not so much what He says about the Bible as what He is Himself as presented in the Bible, that we have now in mind.

We will first consider some features of His character, and then attempt to show the argument that may be deduced from it. That character is unique in several particulars, some of which at once suggest themselves even to the most superficial thought.



For example, His wisdom. "Never man spake like this Man," was the testimony of the officers sent to take Him—a testimony repeated by the profoundest scholars in all the ages since. And with the testimony has come the ever-recurring question of the people, "How hath this man letters, having never learned?"

To His wisdom we must add His power, so commanding as to astonish every one and compel the exclamation even from those reluctant to acknowledge His Messiahship, "When Christ cometh will He do more miracles than these which this Man hath done?"

And to His power His humility, for He who is able to drive the traders from the temple with a whip of small cords, stoops to wash His disciple's feet; and He who can prostrate His captors to the ground by a glance, voluntarily delivers Himself into their hands.

And to His humility, His self-sacrifice, who sought not His own glory, who had not where to lay His head, who was ever

at the service of His kind, and who came into the world, not to do His own will but the will of Him who sent Him.

And to His self-sacrifice, His love, shown in healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, in blessing little children, in weeping over Jerusalem that had rejected Him, and weeping over it not for His sake who was rejected, but for the city's sake that had rejected Him, and praying for His murderers even in the agony of crucifixion. Such love is more to be appreciated in the light of the first century than of this, for eighteen hundred years of the Gospel have done much to modify the hardness and indifference of men; but where, it may be asked, were any of the heroes of antiquity painted in such colors?

And to His love, His dignity and majesty of demeanor. "Who dared have taken any liberty with Jesus Christ? When did He ever flee through fear? When was He carried away by success or driven to despondency by opposition? When did He ever apologise for anything He had said

or done, or retrace a step He had taken, or recall a word He had spoken? When did enemy override Him? When did Satan baffle Him? When did any experience, coming howsoever suddenly and unexpectedly upon Him, disturb His balanced equipoise?" Even Theodore Parker bears witness that standing alone against the world there was majesty and supremacy in every attitude and aspect of Jesus' life.

And to His dignity, His sinlessness, for He alone of all the human beings who ever lived could challenge His contemporaries with the question "Which of you convinces Me of sin?" The sinlessness of Jesus is shown not only by the testimony of His friends, but His enemies. The criticisms and reproaches heaped upon Him were for virtues rather than faults. He was blamed for associating with evil-doers, for breaking the Sabbath and making Himself equal with God; but in every case the charge concerned that in which He was doing good to men, glorifying His Father and bearing testimony to the truth. It is at

this point we find a possible answer to the question why one of His disciples should have had the character of Judas. May it not have been that from even such a malignant source the same testimony might be borne to His faultlessness? It has been aptly said: "Had there been one act of sin, one failure in all the Redeemer's career, in His hour of awful agony Judas would have remembered it for his comfort; but the bitterness of his despair, that which made 'his life insufferable, was that he had betrayed the innocent blood.' "

And yet the strongest testimony to the sinlessness of Jesus is Himself; not what He said or did so much as what He did not say or do. Some one has said, "The pores of the soul are always open." "Instinctively, unconsciously, whether a man will or no," says Canon Liddon, "the insignificance or the greatness of his inner life reveals itself." If Jesus had been aware of sin in His own experience it must have shown itself somewhere in His outer life, in His speech. "When we remember how

conscious of personal sinfulness the purest men have always been; when we see such natures as those of Pascal and Jonathan Edwards scanning with angelic insight the Law of God, and trembling like an electrometer in a thunderstorm, the moral wonder of this Galilean peasant who never uttered a prayer for forgiveness, who never betrayed the faintest consciousness of imperfection or moral demerit, becomes more and more astounding." ("Christianity the World-Religion.")

Let us contrast Him with His own disciples. Take Paul, who once spake of himself as "the chief of sinners;" take the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who declared, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves." Did Jesus ever accuse Himself like this? And if not, what inference should be drawn therefrom? Must it not be true either that His soul was less refined than theirs, His spiritual sensibilities less keen, or that "He was tempted in all points like as we are, *yet without sin?*"

Indeed, we may sum up the character

of Jesus Christ as presented in the Gospels in the one word "perfection." "He was the sum of all that men should copy, the opposite of all that they should shun." What a marvelous union of virtues did He possess! Piety and philanthropy, mercy and justice, courage and prudence, majesty and lowliness, love and truth were in Him alone seen in operation together. He was the ideal Man, the representative Man, the catholic Man, the universal Man, the archetypal Man, the perfect Man!

But He was more. It must ever remain one of the unfathomable mysteries of the human mind, one of the strongest evidences of the blindness of the human heart unillumined by the power of the Holy Ghost, that men professing to be Christians can read the Gospels and not discover that He was God! What of the stupendous claims He made in the light of the lowliness of His human origin, and the obscurity of His early life? Was He not more than an earthly, did He not demand acknowledgment as a heavenly King? Did

not His rule extend to the inner motives of men? Did He not forgive sin? Was not His kingdom to cover the whole earth? Were not His penalties and rewards to reach beyond the present age and beyond the grave? Did He not hear without denial the charge that He put Himself on equality with God, and did He not frame an argument in demonstration of it? Moreover, were not these prerogatives and these assertions put forth without the slightest manifestation of enthusiasm, and in the most perfect sobriety of spirit, and with the utmost sanity? What then shall we say to these things as an evidence of the uniqueness and transcendence, to say the least, of the person and character of Jesus Christ as set before us by the four evangelists?

This question leads us to the argument for the truth of the Bible as drawn from such premises. For example, Where did this conception of the character of Jesus Christ originate? Shall we regard it as fallacious? Is it merely a creation of the

evangelists themselves? Did the Person thus set before us never actually exist? Were the writers wicked men, perpetuating a fraud upon the world? Such an hypothesis cannot stand for several reasons; not only because the evangelists are everywhere acknowledged as good men, morally incapable of such a fraud, but because if they were bad men they would be equally incapable of painting such a character. Holiness is as alien to such as those as light is to the blind. And then there is not merely the thought of moral but intellectual incapacity. The power of describing character is so great an art that but few writers have ever lived who were equal to the task, and absolutely none have lived who could of themselves portray a perfect man. How then could such results be expected from a tax collector like Matthew, or a fisherman like John?

And the difficulty is all the more increased when, as another has pointed out, they do not even profess to attempt to delineate the character of Jesus Christ. They nei-



ther dilate on His qualities nor eulogise His merits. They seldom even intermingle any reflective commentary whatsoever with what He said or did, but merely record His doings and discourses in frank admission of their own weakness and inability to apprehend Him. And yet behold! they have given us the portrait, and the only portrait in the world, of a divine Man, a glorious and holy Saviour! Four brief memoirs is all they wrote, and yet the study and research of Christendom have not yet exhausted them, and the bitterest opposition and criticism of the world have not shaken them. What explanation can be made of this phenomenon? How did these four unlearned and ignorant men, Luke partially excepted, solve this mighty problem of humanity with such preciseness and originality? Is not Professor Moorehead right when he says only two answers are rationally possible? First, they had before them the living Model, the personal, historic Christ; and secondly, even then they must have written by

inspiration of God. "Men could no more invent the God-man than they could create a world, and even with the God man before them they must have had the assistance of the Holy Ghost." ("The Moral Glory of Jesus Christ".)

The bearing of all this upon the truth, not only of the Gospels, but through them of the whole Bible, must be very apparent. Even infidels have borne testimony to it. One of these, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, is spoken of as at once one of the most brilliant and most licentious nobles of the gay and dissolute court of Charles II. But he was laid aside at a certain time by a serious disease that gave him opportunity for reflection. To break the monotony of forced retirement, he began the reading of books, and one day happened to pick up a Greek translation of the prophet Isaiah. His eye fell on the fifty-third chapter, which contains that marvelous foreview of the suffering Redeemer, that masterpiece from God's armory, as it has been called, and the very jewel of the

Scriptures. He read it very carefully and thoughtfully several times, and at length said, Where did this man Isaiah obtain such a conception as this? Put aside altogether the question of the historic or un-historic reality of the character he describes, how did he, or how could any human being unaided by the divine come by the knowledge of such a man? Nor did the problem solve itself in his mind until he was compelled to the admission of the supernatural enlightenment of the prophet, and ultimately to the acceptance of Jesus as his personal Saviour. Bishop Burnet testifies that if ever there was a case of genuine repentance on earth it was that of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. But that which convinced him of the truth of the Bible must convince any man who will give to it the same thoughtful and unprejudiced consideration.

“Eighteen hundred years ago,  
Upon Judean hills  
A character of wondrous blending  
Suddenly appears;  
The man of destiny;

Man destined to be;  
In profile projected;  
By prophets predicted;  
In symbols reflected;  
Longed for—expected;  
By all ages desired;  
By archangels admired.  
Like man He walked;  
Like God He talked.  
His words were oracles;  
His acts were miracles.  
Of God, the best expression;  
Of man, the finest specimen.  
Full-orbed humanity,  
Crowned with divinity;  
No taint of iniquity,  
Nor trace of infirmity.  
Ecce Homo: behold the man;  
Ecce Deus: behold the God.”

JAMES L. GORDON.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What is the strongest proof of the divinity of the Bible?
2. In how many particulars is the character of Jesus Christ unique?
3. How would you prove the sinlessness of Jesus?
4. What tends to prove His Deity?
5. What argument for the truth of the Bible is deduced from the foregoing?
6. Who have borne witness to the power of this argument?

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE PROVEN BY ITS ACHIEVEMENTS

**A**T the risk of unduly extending this part of our subject, we should like to speak of another class of evidence for the truth of the Bible before entering, as we shall in our next chapter, upon the proof of its inspiration.

Thus far we have sought to show its divine origin by the fact of its need, the circumstances attending its promulgation especially in the case of the Gospels, the character of its contents, and the conception of the divine Man it reveals. But little or nothing has been said directly of what it has accomplished in the world, and yet many would regard this as the most convincing testimony of all.

Let us in this connection, however, and as preliminary thereto, say a word about the attestation from the miracles it re-

cords, which are really to be regarded as among its historical achievements.

A miracle is a supernatural effect—one that cannot be attributed to the laws of nature, or to the will of man. Not that it is a greater manifestation of divine power than that ordinarily observed in nature, but only a different one. Not that it contradicts the laws of nature, but only sets aside a lower law by a higher one. Now that Christ and His apostles—not to mention the Old Testament prophets—performed works of this character, and that they continually appealed to them as signs of their divine commission, is too patent to require proof (see John xiv. 11, Acts ii. 22, xv. 12). And that these miracles were genuine and true is demonstrated by such simple facts as these, for example: (1) They were such as were brought to the test of the senses of men—the senses of the most ignorant as well as the learned. Any one could determine for himself very easily whether it were bread and fish on which the multitude were fed, and whether Laz-

arus actually lived after having died. (2) They were numerous and varied. Forty are related at large in the New Testament, without speaking of those that are grouped together in such allusions as Matthew viii. 16. (3) They were rigidly investigated both by Jewish priests and elders, and Roman magistrates, and (4) they were corroborated by the testimony, direct and indirect, of the most bitter enemies.

But the greatest of all the miracles recorded in the Bible is that of the resurrection of Jesus Himself from the dead. If this be established as true all else stands firm. Even Strauss, the great German infidel, who certainly has done as much as any one theological writer in this century to disparage the Gospel, admits this. He calls the resurrection of Christ the real heart of Christianity for example, the center of the center, and adds that with it the truth of Christianity stands or falls. But if one will read such books as Christlieb's "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," he will see how exhaustively the objections of

Strauss and every similar opponent have been considered, and how convincingly their hypotheses have been overthrown, by evidence at once "exegetical, psychological, dogmatical, chronological, topographical, historical and moral," so that figuratively speaking they have "not a leg to stand upon."

It may be safely assumed that the strongest historical proof of Christ's resurrection is the effect of it upon the early disciples, and through them upon the world. Dr. Barrows in his Hindu lectures, referred to previously, puts this finely when he says, "On the eve of the crucifixion the Church was virtually annihilated, the disciples scattered, fearful and hopeless. On the day of Pentecost the Church is victorious, uplifted, having a world-victory in its heart of hopeful faith. During these days 'something happened' to work the mighty transformation, to turn cowards into heroes, and shirks into apostles. 'Something happened' to lift a company of timid, heart-brok-



en men and women into the regenerators of mankind, whose lines of spiritual energy have gone out into all the earth, toppling down ancient systems, girding the world with bands of splendor, and lighting torches of spiritual light on the mountains of Europe, America, India, China, Japan and Africa, which have become the beacon fires of a universal faith!" What that "something" was, it is scarcely needful to add, could only have been the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Primitive Christianity is inexplicable without it.

This brings us very naturally to the more particular subject of this chapter, with reference to which we shall mention a few concrete facts. Take, for example the history of certain classes of the social order before and after the introduction of the Gospel. The Romans used to put their aged and useless slaves to perish on an island in the Tiber, or drown them as food for their fish-ponds, or pit them against wild beasts in the amphitheatre. And they were not slaves of a darker color

and inferior race necessarily, but oftentimes prisoners of war, physically and intellectually their equals. Children had no rights either of life or liberty which fathers were bound to respect, and they too might be abandoned to the wild beasts or otherwise slain at pleasure, given in marriage without their consent, or excluded from the household even at maturity, and others adopted in their stead. Women in Greece, were excluded from public affairs and the education provided for men, daughters legally inherited nothing from their fathers, wives could conclude no bargains on their own account, and in Rome, at least, husbands had a qualified, if not absolute power over their lives. Nor could mothers be the legal guardians of their own children. As to men, the individual was absorbed in the state or nation to which he belonged and to which he owed unlimited allegiance. "He was its appendage or slave rather than the rightful recipient of its favors." The spirit of caste reigned, and the highest privileges of life

and citizenship were confined to a limited oligarchy. Nations were generally disregarded of the welfare or rights of one another, pretexts were easily found for wars, and the latter were carried on not for any reasons of humanity comparable to those which actuated our own government in the conflict with Spain or the subjugation of the Philippines, but solely for the purpose of conquest or pillage.

The changes which have come to pass in these and other respects are happily very evident. Early Christian historians picture the Roman nobility and their slaves sitting down together as brethren at the Lord's table. Today slavery is dead or dying the world over. Today where parental affection fails to protect or educate children, the law of the land does it. Today women are emancipated legally, intellectually and morally, and the status of the individual is interpreted in the lines of Robert Burns:

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that."

Today nations feel a sense of responsibility to one another as nations, as well as to God. Wars are fewer and meet with earnest protest where they might be avoided—witness the peace conference at The Hague. Arbitration is increasingly insisted upon, treaties are sacredly regarded, surrendered prisoners, with rare exceptions, are treated humanely, and peace rather than war is supposed to be the normal condition of the great families of the earth. We say nothing just now as to how far both individuals and nations fall short of the ideals set before them in the Bible, but simply compare what exists with the condition in earlier days.

And the questions is What has produced these changes? How shall we account for this moral earthquake? Some might be disposed to attribute these things to the advancing strides of civilisation, but what constitutes civilisation? Is it not commerce and navigation, wealth and power, science and art? And did not the old world possess these? Were not Rome and

Greece civilised? Why then were not these effects seen there prior to the advent of Jesus Christ? Are not India, China and Japan civilised, and yet equally destitute of these things except as influenced by Christianity? Is it not the clear teaching of history that the change in these matters dates from and follows in the wake of the Gospel? What other new force has entered into the world capable of producing them? Moreover, do not current missionary annals add the weight of their testimony to the same fact? What of Australia, Madagascar, Africa, and the Islands of the Pacific Ocean as illustrations? Here cannibals have been humanised, human sacrifices abolished, moral abominations uprooted, education diffused, and churches, hospitals and orphan asylums erected within the memory of our own time.

But the force of this testimony to the truth of the Bible is very much increased by considering the opposition with which the Bible met, and the difficulties with which it had to contend. The reference

now is especially to the New Testament, and the establishment of the Gospel. There was first, the almost insuperable obstacle that Christianity claimed to displace every other religion, that it not only demanded to stand, but to stand alone. And to this should be added what was equally if not more serious in the eyes of a pagan, viz.: that as to its character it was a rule of conduct rather than a mere system of ritual, and demanded of its followers those self-denying virtues to which heathenism was a stranger. Then there was the organised opposition of the Jewish priests and the Roman magistrates. Also the further circumstance that the leaders of the movement were for the most part "unlearned and ignorant men," few in number, and confronted by the intensest persecution. And yet notwithstanding all this, fifty days after our Lord's crucifixion three thousand souls were added to the faith, a few days subsequently the number was increased to five thousand souls, and in less than a year and a half "multitudes" had be-

come converted, among them a great company of priests. In double that period churches were scattered throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and within five years the truth had been proclaimed to the Gentiles with even greater results. These historical declarations of the Acts of the Apostles are corroborated as we have seen, by heathen writers such as Tacitus, the historian, and Pliny, the Roman Governor of Bithynia, the latter bearing witness that the heathen temples were almost deserted. It is perfectly within the limits of truth and soberness to say that nothing like this has ever been approached in the history of the religions of the world, and that it leaves Christianity in a position absolutely unique, establishing the truth of the Bible by what it has achieved.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What is a miracle?
2. Show that Christ and His apostles are said to have performed miracles.
3. What shows these miracles to have been genuine?
4. What is the greatest miracle of all?

5. What is the strongest proof of the resurrection of Christ? .

6. What changes in certain classes of the social order have followed the Gospel?

7. How can it be shown that these are attributable to its influence?

8. How is the force of this testimony increased?

9. How does the religion of the Bible compare in this respect with the other religions of the world?



PART THIRD

THE INSPIRATION OF THE  
BIBLE



## CHAPTER X.

### THE ARGUMENT FOR INSPIRATION

**W**ITH this chapter we enter upon another division of our theme, and begin to consider the inspiration of the Bible. Just as earlier it was shown that a book might be authentic and yet not true, genuine as to its authorship, but unworthy of credit in its statements of facts, so now it must be admitted that a book may be true, worthy of entire reliance in what it says, and yet at the same time not be inspired in any supernatural sense. But the Bible is not only true, but inspired as well.

By inspiration in this case we mean that operation of the Holy Ghost on the minds of the writers of the Bible, by which they were enabled to compose its books. We do not undertake to explain its mode any more than we can explain the case of a man who has been generated by the same Spirit. We cannot define the method by which the

Third Person in the Trinity acts on the sinner's heart causing him to be born again, but we know the transaction has taken place on the testimony of the Word of God and the effects we see in the sinner's life. And it is much the same with the spiritual phenomenon of inspiration. We believe the one as we do the other not because we understand it, but because it is declared a fact on competent testimony.

And now, what is that testimony? Practically, it is threefold. There is first, the philosophy, or what might be called the very nature of the case, and which may be stated thus :

(1) The Bible is a supernatural revelation of the will of God to men for their salvation ; (2) it was given to certain men of one age to be conveyed in writing to other men in other ages ; (3) the best and ablest of men experience difficulty in giving faithful reflections of their thoughts to others, because of sin, ignorance, defective memory and the inaccuracy always incident to the use of language. From all

of which it may be easily deduced that if that revelation is to be communicated precisely as it was originally received, the same supernatural power must be put forth in the one case as in the other.

And then, second, there is the history and character of the Bible itself as evidence of its inspiration. To borrow, in part, the language of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "The Heavenliness of its matter, the efficacy of its doctrine, the unity of its various parts, the majesty of its style and the scope and completeness of its design," all indicate the divinity of its origin. These things have been dwelt on more or less in the preceding treatment of our theme. All that has been said concerning the authenticity and truth of the Bible almost necessarily involves its inspiration, for the more we think about it, the more must we be convinced that men unaided by the Spirit of God could neither have conceived, or put together, or preserved in its integrity

that precious deposit known as the Sacred Oracles.

But, thirdly, the basis of the foregoing, the strongest argument for the inspiration of the Bible, and that which will constitute the substance of this and the chapters to follow, is the declarations of the Bible itself, and the inferences that may be drawn therefrom. Nor is it reasoning in a circle to say this. For if the Bible be true, and we may be supposed to have demonstrated that point, it is certainly competent to say whether it is inspired, and if so, to what extent or in what way it is inspired.

When we open the covers of the Bible to ascertain this question, we are met with such clear and emphatic utterances on the subject as II. Timothy iii. 16, and II. Peter i. 21. The first reads thus, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine . . . ." It is clear from the context that "Scripture" in this case means the Holy Writings which Tim-

othy had known from a child, and "which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." In other words it means the Bible, for no other Scripture is able to do this. Doubtless it should be confined, however, to the Old Testament, for in Timothy's childhood the New was not yet written, but with that qualification the declaration is absolute. The phrase "given by inspiration of God," literally means *God-breathed*. Paul, then, is our witness that the whole of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi is "God-breathed." It is true that this verse is translated somewhat differently in the Revised Version, giving rise to cavilling as to the sweep of its application, but in answer to that at least two things may be said: (1) Some of the most learned Greek scholars of the age esteem the translation in the Revised Version as the less accurate and desirable of the two; and (2) some of the devoutest Christians and firmest believers in the inspiration of the whole Bible would accept it as an equally strong and

comprehensive declaration, even on the supposition that it were the more correct. As a matter of fact also, the revisers themselves place the King James translation in the margin as of practically equal authority, and to be chosen if preferred. These considerations may serve to remove any hesitation as to the acceptance of the apostle's teaching in the fullest sense, whichever rendering is adopted.

But to this add the testimony of Peter: "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but menspake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." In this instance the language of the Revision is used as perhaps the stronger declaration of the two. The "prophecy" applies to the written word as indicated in the preceding verse, and is by no means to be limited to the foretelling of events. It can easily be shown to include any word which God speaks by man whether referring to time past, present or future, and so becomes as striking a demonstration of the inspiration of the Old



Testament, and the whole of it, as the previous words of Paul.

Then, in connection with this direct testimony to the inspiration of the Old Testament consider the indirect. (1) The way in which the writers speak of the origin of their messages, for example: "Thus saith the Lord." How often is that expression or its equivalent used? I think it was Dr. James H. Brookes, of St. Louis, who computed it as two thousand times! What a demonstration that is in itself of the divinity of that Word! Furthermore, take (2), the way in which the New Testament writers introduce quotations from the Old. Read Matthew i. 22, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Read Acts ii. 17, or Hebrews iii. 7, and many similar places, where such expressions are employed as, "Saith God," or "The Holy Ghost saith." (3) Consider again, the manner in which Christ and His apostles treat the Old Testament. Did not our blessed Lord declare

that He came "not to destroy but to fulfill the law and the prophets," Matthew v. 17, 18? And that "the Scripture cannot be broken," John x. 35? Did He not show Himself careful to employ its precise words in dealing with the tempter in the wilderness, Matt. iv.? Did He not sometimes use single words as the bases of the most important doctrines? Observe this twice in one chapter of Matthew (the twenty-second), once in speaking of the resurrection (verses 31, 32), and once in referring to His own deity (42-45). And do not the apostles follow the example of their Master in this respect? Paul is a notable illustration of it. Galations iii. 16; Hebrews ii. 8, 11; xii. 26, 27, and other places that might be named, are quite parallel to the chapter in Matthew. Opportunity may be embraced later on to refer more particularly to one or two of these texts, but if the reader will peruse them for himself in the light of the contexts in some of the instances, and with the aid of the marginal references in others, he will

be impressed with the strength of the evidence they bear to the point before us.

Having now pointed out some of the proof, direct and indirect, for the inspiration of the Old Testament, let us do the same for the New.

The New Testament is the later, and for that reason the more important revelation of the two, and hence if the former were inspired it certainly must be true of the latter. Hebrews i. 1, 2, compared with ii. 1-3, plainly suggests this. And the inference is rendered still more conclusive by the circumstance that the New Testament sometimes explains, sometimes proves, and sometimes even repeals ordinances of the Old Testament. See Matt. i. 22, 23; Acts xiii. 19-39; Gal. v. 6. Assuredly this would not be the case if the New Testament were not of equal, and in a sense greater, authority than the Old.

Again, as others have shown, the writers of the New Testament were of an equal, indeed of a higher rank than those of the Old. That they were prophets is

evident from such allusions as Romans xvi. 25-27 and Ephesians iii. 4, 5. But that they were more than prophets is indicated in the fact that wherever in the New Testament prophets and apostles are both mentioned, the last-named is always mentioned first (I. Cor. xii. 28; Eph. ii. 20; iv. 11). Thirdly, the writers of the New Testament, indeed, had a higher mission than those of the Old, since they were sent forth by Christ as He had been sent forth by the Father (John xx. 21); they were to go not to a single nation only (as Israel), but into all the world (Matthew xxviii. 19); they received the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xvi. 19); and they are to be pre-eminently rewarded in the regeneration (Matt. xix. 28). It seems plain that these considerations and comparisons should not be overlooked in estimating the authority by which they wrote.

Nor should it be forgotten, in the fourth place, that the writers of the New Testament were especially qualified for their work, as will be seen by a reference to

such passages as Matt. x. 19, 20; Mark xiii. 11; Luke xii. 12; John xiv. 26; xvi. 13, 14. In some of these instances inspiration of the most absolute character was promised as to what they should *speak*, but the inference is warranted that none the less would they be guided in what they wrote. Their spoken words were limited and temporary in their sphere, but their written utterances covered the whole range of revelation and were to last forever. If in the one case they were inspired, how much more likely in the other?

And finally, the writers of the New Testament directly claim divine inspiration. See, for example, Acts xv. 23-29 (especially verse 28); I. Cor. ii. 13; I. Thess. ii. 13; II. Peter iii. 2, 15, 16; Rev. ii. 7. The language of Peter will be found especially strong, since in the first quoted instance he places his own words on a level with those of the prophets of the Old Testament, and in the second he does the same with those of Paul.

## QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What is meant by inspiration?
2. Can its method be explained?
3. Why then, may it be believed?
4. What three lines of testimony are given?
5. State the argument from the nature of the case.
6. State the argument from the history and character of the Bible itself.
7. On what ground may the third argument be considered legitimate?
8. Give the words of II. Timothy iii. 16, and II. Peter i. 21.
9. Give an exegesis of the first-named.
10. How is the word "prophecy" to be construed in II. Peter i. 21?
11. Give the outline of the indirect testimony to the inspiration of the Old Testament.
12. Give some illustrations of the way in which Christ and His apostles employ the language of the Old Testament.
13. What five arguments go to show the inspiration of the New Testament?
14. State some of the passages in which the New Testament writers claim inspiration.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO INSPIRATION

**W**HAT now is to be said in opposition to the inspiration of the Scriptures?

That opposition discloses itself under three classes. There are those who deny it altogether, others who admit it as a fact, but limit its application to certain books, and still a third which would grant its general application to the whole Bible, but maintain that it meant the inspiration of the thoughts of the writers only and not their words, the substance of the books but not their form.

Concerning the first class it should be said that the inspiration they deny is a miraculous or special inspiration. They admit an inspiration of some sort, but fail to distinguish it from human genius developed to an extraordinary degree. It is only the same in their eyes as that of Homer, or Dante, or Shakespeare, or Browning,

*i.e.*, there is nothing supernatural about it. To refute this it is only necessary to recall what has gone before in our consideration of the general subject, and yet an added thought or two will not be out of place.

For example, none of the literary geniuses referred to ever presumed to claim the same inspiration as the Bible. You will peruse their writings in vain for any such phrase as "Thus saith the Lord," indicating the authority by which they themselves speak. This is reserved for the "holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Again, you will observe a striking difference between the style of their writings and that of the Bible in passing from one to the other. Neander points out this in comparing the works of the apostles even with those of the apostolic fathers, so nearly their contemporaries, the transition not being gradual, but abrupt. And he concludes that the phenomenon should lead us to acknowledge a special agency of the divine Spirit, a new creative element in the one case, not in



the other. "I am satisfied only with the style of Scripture," says Oetinger. "My own style, and that of all other men cannot satisfy me. If I read only three or four verses I am sure of their divinity on account of their inimitableness. It is the style of the heavenly court." "As for comparing the inspiration of Scripture to that of Homer or Shakespeare," says Rabinowitz, the Russian-Christian Jew, "it is not a question of degree but of kind. Electricity will pass through an iron bar but not a rod of glass, however beautiful and transparent, because it has no affinity for it. So the Spirit of God dwells in the Word of God because it is His proper medium, but not in Homer or Shakespeare, because He has no affinity with these writings."

The second class of objectors would admit the miraculous inspiration of the prophetic portions of the Bible, the words of Jesus, and the profoundly spiritual teachings of the epistles it may be, but deny it to the historical books. They would claim that the data in these books might be ob-

tained from natural sources eliminating the necessity of special divine guidance. But to this several replies suggest themselves:—

In the first place, the Bible itself makes no distinction as to the inspiration or authority of any of its parts. "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*"

In the second place, while it is true that the writers may have obtained historical data from natural sources, yet divine guidance was required in their selection and narration. This can be easily shown, one would think, by a comparison between the historical records found in the Word of God and those recently discovered as the result of excavations in Bible lands. The bricks and tablets and monuments upturned by the pickaxe and spade in our day contain enough to show that they point toward the same original as the contents of the Bible, but their childishness, their grossness, and oftentimes their hideousness, is sufficient evidence of the human and sinful mould through which they ran, and the

need of some power other than man himself to lead him out of the labyrinth of error into the open ground of truth. In the light of these records the book of Genesis, for example, is self-evidently inspired.

But furthermore, the historical books against which this objection is directed are, for some reasons, the most important in the Bible, and hence on that account would need to be inspired even more than the others, rather than less. As an illustration, are they not the bases of the great doctrines of the Bible? Does not the doctrine of sin need for its foundation the historical record of the fall? Would it be possible for us to understand so satisfactorily the doctrine of justification by faith did we not possess the inspired record of God's dealings with Abraham? Does not Paul assume that in Romans iv.? And then, what about the priesthood of Christ? Dismiss the inspiration of Leviticus, a historical book, and what can be made of Hebrews? The Acts of the Apostles is a historical book, but if it be not inspired, little

dependence can be placed on the deductions drawn from it, concerning the Person and work of the Holy Ghost.

As a further illustration, and growing out of the foregoing, how much we find in those books which is prophetic as well as historical! Does not I. Cor. x. 6-11 refer to this? Do not the types and figures in the historical books portray the Saviour of the world in all the varying aspects of His saving grace? And if so, must not the divine rather than the human mind have pre-arranged them? Have not the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, their journey through the wilderness and entrance into Canaan a very close relation as type and anti-type to the spiritual redemption of the Church? Were these things written for our learning? But if so, who could have written them but God?

Nor should we overlook another fact, and that is, that the historical books have the strongest testimony borne to their importance in other places of the Bible. A single indication may suffice if we point to

the use of Deuteronomy by Christ Himself in His conflict with Satan in the wilderness. Thrice is the tempter overcome by a citation from that historical book, and that, too, without note or comment. It is difficult to believe that our Lord did not consider it to be inspired.

The third class of objectors or objections dealing with the inspiration of the very words of Scripture calls for such extended and particular consideration that it is reserved for another chapter.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. Into how many classes may the objections to inspiration be divided?
2. What kind of an inspiration would the first class admit?
3. How would you refute their position?
4. What three witnesses to the peculiar "style" of Scripture are mentioned?
5. Why is objection raised to the inspiration of the historical books?
6. How would you reply in general to this objection?
7. Give some illustrations of the importance of the historical books as bases of doctrine.
8. How did Christ's action strengthen the argument for the historical books?

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE SPECIAL OBJECTION TO THE INSPIRATION OF THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE

**I**N this chapter we deal especially with the hypothesis that God gave only the thoughts to the human writers, and left the latter to express them in their own words. The scholars who advance this hypothesis are much troubled by the thought that to believe in the inspiration of the very words of Scripture is too mechanical a conception, and makes the writers appear to be only mere machines. Verbal inspiration in their view is verbal dictation, and the writers were only like stenographers keeping pace "step by step with divine dictation." This idea they are unwilling to accept.

The whole matter, however, resolves itself into this question, "What saith the Scriptures?" The Bible alone is competent to decide to what extent it is inspired, and if its own testimony points to an inspira-

tion of its very words, who shall contradict it? We believe it can be shown that such is the case, and yet before presenting the direct proof it may be well to consider the objection further from the negative point of view. It lies in the writer's mind like this:—

First, Suppose the writers were “mere machines.” What then? Have we any the less the Word of God? And which are we the more interested in, the free agency of the writers, or the divinity of their message?

Secondly, Suppose they took the subject-matter by dictation. Is even that a sufficiently comprehensive term to express the infallibility by which they wrote? It may be seriously questioned whether it is. Here is an illustration in point: A stenographer and typewriter in a certain office was directed to write the following business letter to a customer:—“Gentlemen, we have received your communication and will now fill your order.” In striking the keys on the machine his finger slipped so

that he pressed a "t" instead of a "w," and when the document was handed to his employer for his signature he was startled to find it read, "Gentlemen, we have received your communication and will not fill your order." Dictation was not enough in the case of that stenographer, and who shall say that it were in the case of the writers of the Old and New Testaments to give us the very mind of God?

Thirdly, Suppose the writers were absolutely under the control of God in the giving of His very words to us, so that they lost their free agency, would this be less true of them if they were absolutely under His control in giving us His thoughts? In what does man's free agency consist? In his power of expression only? Is he free while God controls his thoughts, and does he become a "mere machine" when that control extends to his words?

Fourthly, How can men give us God's thoughts without God's words? How are men conscious of thought except as they are conscious of words clothing the



thought, or rather giving to it a body? If the words of Scripture have no divine authority, how can the thought have authority? If the Holy Ghost speaks in Scripture how can we know what He says, except as we have His words?

Finally, May not God have ways which we do not understand, by which, without violating human freedom, He may be able to mould the thoughts of men into such forms of speech as shall infallibly, and with absolute exactitude, express His will?

But enough of this, let us turn to the positive evidence of the Scripture itself.

I. There were certainly some instances in which the words were given to the human agent without the thoughts. Compare Matthew x. 19, 20; Mark xiii. 11; Luke xii. 11, 12; Acts ii. 4-11; I. Cor. xiv. 1-25; I. Peter i. 10, 11. See also the instances of Balaam, Numbers xxii. 38, xxiii. 12-16; Saul, I. Sam. x. 10, xix. 20-24; and Caiaphas, John xi. 49, 52. The passage in Peter is peculiarly interesting as coming so near a declaration of that very fact to which ob-

jection is made; viz., that the writers were "mere machines," or "stenographers." They are represented as studying their own writings after composition, in an effort to understand them, and the correctness of such a representation is certainly vouched for by the Old Testament prophets themselves in such places as Jeremiah xxxii. 6-44; and Daniel xii. 8. It is pertinent in this connection also, to add that the sacred writers were sometimes mistaken as to their thoughts about things (Acts xxiii. 3-5; Galatians ii. 2-14); but that there is never the slightest intimation that such liability to error attached to their written words.

II. The Scriptures plainly assert that inspiration applies to their words. To recall II. Peter i. 21, "No prophecy ever came by the will of man" (R.V.). Does it not seem reasonable to suppose that if the will of man had nothing to do with the revelation of the prophecy, he could not have been at liberty in the selection of the words? Would not his will have been ac-

tively exercised in such a case? And is not this thought of Peter illustrated where God says He will be with Moses' mouth? And where David says, "His word was in my tongue?" Compare for references of this kind: Exodus iv. 10, 12; Jeremiah i. 6-9; II. Samuel xxiii. 2; Luke i. 68-70; Acts i. 16; Hebrews i. 1, 2. And in the same connection, study I. Cor. ii. 12, 13. In this place Paul is making a very clear distinction between thoughts (or the "things") and the words which express them, and insists upon the divinity of both.

III. It seems clear that Jesus Christ was inspired as to His words: Take, for example, the original promise of His prophetic office as found in Deuteronomy xviii. 18, where Jehovah says, "I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak . . . all that I shall command Him." This taken by itself might not appear so convincing, but what shall we say when we find our blessed Lord everywhere recognising this limitation on His utterances? See John vi. 63; viii. 26, 28, 40; xii. 49, 50; xvii. 8. And

this is further corroborated by all that is taught in the New Testament concerning the relation of the Holy Spirit to the person and work of Christ. Luke iv. 18; Acts i. 2; Revelation ii. 1, 11, indicate His dependence upon the Holy Spirit in preaching the Gospel, in teaching His apostles, and in dictating a letter to the churches.

IV. Christ employed the Scriptures as though they were inspired as to their words. In Matthew iv. He overcomes the tempter by three quotations from the book of Deuteronomy without comment of any kind, except to say, "It is written." In John x. 34-36, He vindicates Himself from the charge of blasphemy by the use of a single word taken from the Psalms. In Matthew xxii. 31, 32, He substantiates the doctrine of the resurrection against the skepticism of the Sadducees by emphasizing the word "am" as found in a certain place in Exodus; and in verses 42-45 of the same chapter He does the same for His own Deity, by alluding to the word "Lord" in Psalm cx.

V. Christ appears to teach that the Scriptures are inspired as to their words. In Matthew v. 17, 18, He declares, "Verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The "jot" is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and the "tittle" a stroke, or part of a stroke, by which Hebrew letters bearing a close resemblance are distinguished from each other. It might appear too slight a premise were we to base an argument on this single fact, but considered in the light of all the foregoing, it is not without corroborative weight in determining the question under consideration.

It goes without saying that there are difficulties in the way of accepting such a view of inspiration as we have here set forth, difficulties which will be considered in the next and concluding chapter, but let us in the meantime rest on this thought, that none of them are to be compared in magnitude with the difficulties attending any other view.

## QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What is a ground of objection to verbal inspiration?
2. What is the ground on which a reply should be based?
3. What are some of the things to be said from a negative point of view?
4. Give an illustration to show the inadequacy even of dictation alone.
5. State the psychological argument indicated in "thirdly" and "fourthly."
6. How does this objection seem to limit God?
7. Give, in outline, the positive argument for verbal inspiration.
8. Name some instances in which the words were given to the human authors separate from the thoughts.
9. Give the rendering of II. Samuel xxiii. 2, and I. Corinthians ii. 12, 13.
10. How does our Lord indicate a limitation on His utterances?
11. Quote Acts i. 2.
12. State the subjects of one or two arguments of Christ apparently based on a single word.
13. Give the meaning of the words "jot" and "tittle."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF VERBAL INSPIRATION

**I**N the preceding chapter, after showing the teaching of Scripture to indicate the inspiration of its form as well as substance, its words no less than its thoughts, it was frankly admitted that there were difficulties in the way of accepting such a conclusion. In weighing these difficulties, however, as we shall now do, two or three considerations should be kept in mind.

In the first place, there are difficulties connected with every view of inspiration whatsoever. In the second place, those connected with this view are slight in comparison with those of any other that can be named. In the third place, it is an acknowledged principle in such matters that one is not obliged to clear away every difficulty about a doctrine in order to its acceptance, always provided that the facts

on which it rests are true. This is particularly the case when the rejection of such a doctrine involves greater difficulties than its acceptance, as in the present instance. But finally, this view of inspiration has one immeasurable advantage over every other in the fact that it seems to agree with the plain declarations of Scripture on the subject, as we have seen. Much more might be said, but we hasten to consider some of the difficulties themselves.

I. The variety in style. If all the authors of the Bible were alike inspired, it is said, they would have the same style, whereas we perceive a great difference in style between Moses, for example, and Isaiah, and Peter and Paul. True, but may not the Holy Spirit have more than one style? Will He, who first created men with different styles, be denied the power and privilege of using those men just as He created them? Does not the same human being use different styles in composing different literary productions? One of the best-loved poets of our generation was



a Wall Street banker. Was there not a wide difference between his style in a commercial letter and a musical lyric? If one were sending you a message through an illiterate laborer, and sending another the same message through a college professor, would not his style vary, but would his identity be changed? What is the divine method of working in external nature? Are any two individuals, even of the same species, exactly alike? And does this prove that their creators are different persons? As one dwells seriously and profoundly on the variety of style in the sacred penmen, it becomes an argument for, rather than against the unity and plentitude of the agency that inspired them.

II. The differences in the narratives. Such differences are of two kinds. In the first place, the New Testament writers sometimes change important words in quoting from the Old Testament; and in the second place, the same event is sometimes given differently by different writers. This could not be the case, it is supposed,

if the writers in both instances were alike inspired. This difficulty is greatly diminished in our estimation when we reflect that the Holy Spirit is Himself the Author of both Testaments, and that it is a law in literature that an author has a perfect right to quote himself as he pleases, and to give a different turn to an expression here or there as a changed condition of affairs makes it necessary or desirable to do so. It will be found on close examination that some of these mis-(?)-quotations from the Old into the New Testament show such a distinct progression of truth, and such an evident application of a teaching of an earlier dispensation to the new circumstances of a later one, as to afford, like the preceding "difficulty," a confirmation of their divine origin rather than an argument against it. Isaiah lix. 20, quoted in Romans xi. 26, and Amos ix. 11, quoted in Acts xv. 16, are regarded as cases in point. For those who desire to examine this subject more thoroughly, the writer would recommend a volume entitled "The

Quotations in the New Testament from the Old," by Professor Franklin Johnson, D.D., of Chicago University.

It is, indeed, true that the same event is sometimes reported differently by different writers in the Bible, as for example, in the oft-quoted illustration of the inscription on the cross. But in such cases it will be found that none of these reports is, even in itself, untrue. It will be found further, that the Holy Spirit may have had a specific design in the presentation of the same event under different aspects; those very differences, for example, may result in emphasising one central feature of that event as that to which particular attention is directed. Professor Robert Watts, D.D., of Belfast, in his valuable work on "Faith and Inspiration," shows quite conclusively that such is true of the inscription on the cross, where differences in the narratives serve to emphasise the solemn and momentous truth that He who was crucified was "The King of the Jews." Write down the four versions one under the other, where you

can see them at a glance, and that fact will strangely impress itself upon you.

III. A third difficulty arises from the supposed discrepancies between certain statements of the Bible and the facts of history and natural science, which may be met somewhat as follows: In the first place each so-called discrepancy must be dealt with separately as it arises, and considered on its own merits. Ask an objector who proposes such a "difficulty," what particular discrepancy he has in mind. He may not be able to state any very definitely, and if he does, the removal of it may be a very simple matter indeed. The so-called "discrepancy" between Matthew and Luke as to whether one thief or the two railed upon Jesus on the cross, may reasonably be met by the reply that during the day one of the two became penitent, and though he reviled in the morning, he blessed in the evening. Hence both evangelists are right. It may be remarked further that no small number of these "discrepancies" are to be accounted for by the

errors of copyists in transcribing manuscripts in the past, and are not at all chargeable to the original autographs. Our Biblical critics are able to discover such errors by comparison, and allowances are made for them in the best commentaries. Still further, some of these "discrepancies" are, after all, not between statements of the Bible and facts of natural science, but between erroneous conceptions or interpretations of such statements, and immature conclusions of science. The old story of Galileo is in point. He did not contradict the Bible in affirming that the earth moved round the sun, but only the false theological assumptions on that subject. In the same way, but from the opposite point of view, take the supposed contradictions between the Bible and science on the age of man. Science has been altogether too hasty in generalising on his great antiquity, and Sir J. William Dawson, in his book, "The Meeting-Place of Geology and History," practically substantiates the inferences from Scripture with reference there-

to. As a matter of fact, advancing light has already removed many of these "discrepancies" of an earlier time, and it is fairly presumable, as Dr. Charles Hodge said, that further light will remove all. This light, be it remembered, is as necessary to be thrown on the Word as on the work of God, the Bible as well as nature has much more to be discovered by the diligent and humble seeker after truth, whose patient and prayerful spirit it becomes all of us to copy.

IV. A fourth difficulty is found in certain declarations of Scripture itself, especially in the epistles of Paul. Sometimes he says, "I speak as a man," or "After the manner of man" (Romans iii. 5; vi. 19; Galations iii. 15), and it has been thought that there he was qualifying his authority. But the explanation is that in such places he was using the language or arguments common among men for the sake of elucidating his point, while, of course, he may have been as fully led of the Holy Spirit to do so, as in the case of anything else he ever

wrote. What he quoted from men was not of the same essential value as what he received more directly from God, but the *record* that he so quoted it, is as truly inspired as any other part of the record. It is an inspired record for which we are contending. There are many words in the Bible that are not primarily God's words. For example, the words of Satan now and again, the words of Job's false comforters, the words of false prophets, the words of the self-righteous Pharisees blaspheming God in the Person of Jesus Christ, and other utterances of this kind which will suggest themselves to you. These are not God's words, of course, but the record that these persons spake so is God's record, and in that sense God's Word. It is so with this particular language of Paul, and a careful observance of the distinction it emphasises will do much to brush away almost innumerable difficulties about inspiration besides the one now under consideration.

There are several declarations of Paul in

I. Corinthians vii. that present difficulty. For example, at verse 6, he says, "I speak this by permission, not of commandment." Does it not look as if here at least, he was speaking on his own authority alone? Not when you examine the context. His subject is the right of Christians to marry, which he defends, and then lest his words should be construed into a command to marry, he adds, but "I speak this of permission, not of commandment." That is, you are at liberty to marry if you choose, but not under obligation to do so. In other words, verse 6, does not refer to his own authority as a teacher at all, but to their freedom touching marital relations. Again, at verse 10 of that chapter he says, "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord," while at verse 12, he adds, "but to the rest speak I, not the Lord." It would appear at first thought, as if he declared himself inspired in the one case, but not in the other. The explanation, however, is that at verse 10, he is alluding to what the Lord spake on the subject of marriage,



while in the flesh on the earth, and at verse 12, he is adding to that instruction what the Holy Spirit had given him to say on the same theme. His own words are thus put on a level with those of our Lord, a claim which strengthens rather than otherwise the contention of the present moment. At verse 40, there is a somewhat puzzling expression, "I think also that I have the spirit of God." Apparently he is in doubt about it, the questioner says. But the answer is found in the condition of things in the Corinthian Church. Paul's enemies within that fold had been seeking to counteract his teachings on various points, and claiming that they had the Spirit of God. With reference to that claim he replies with justifiable irony, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (Revised Version). "I think," in the mouth of one having apostolic authority, may be taken as a modest form of expression carrying with it the strongest assertion of the judgment in question ("Faith and Inspiration," p. 193).

V. While all the difficulties cannot be alluded to in so brief a space, the principal ones will have been touched upon if, in conclusion, reference is made to the translations. It is common to say, "Granted that the original autographs were verbally inspired, of what advantage is it to contend for that when, as is known, those autographs passed away with the using, and only translations are now left? You do not contend for a verbally-inspired translation?" A distinguished theological professor recently gave expression to this old saw by remarking, that it did not make much difference to a man with patched trousers to be told that they were once whole. To this it was replied, however, that while it might not make much difference to the man who wore the trousers, it made a great difference to the tailor who made them. And this homely answer presents us with a strong argument to contend for the absolute inerrancy of the original autographs without reference to the translations. God's honor is involved in

the proposition that the revelation of His will in His Word was as perfect when it came from His mind as that in nature. And then there is still another reason for insisting on a verbally-inspired original even though we have only an imperfect translation. And that is the basis it affords, and the only basis, for textual criticism. What is the use of a man's digging for a foundation for a building if no foundation is to be found? Why do our Biblical critics labor so hard over the history and meaning of particular words in the text, if it be not felt that in the last analysis they will reach the bedrock of the divine? Actions speak louder than words, and however some of them may oppose the idea of verbal inspiration, their conduct indicates an unconscious conviction of its truth.

But to come to more direct argument on the subject, can it be imagined that God was at such pains, so to speak, to inspire the original manuscripts which He knew were soon to decay, and that He were quite indifferent to their translations which He

knew would transmit His mind to all generations? What does our present Revised Version testify on that point? "It is the product of the ripest scholarship of the English-speaking tongue in the two hemispheres. It had at its command all the additional light that two hundred and seventy years of intensest interest and research could throw upon it. All scholars who have critically examined and compared it, concede its fidelity to the original text. And yet, what error, fundamental to the the Christian faith, has been discovered? What doctrine, accepted by the Church universal, has been set aside or materially modified? Does it not witness that through the centuries God has been watching over the translations of His written Word, and that in an essential sense it is like His Word Incarnate, "the same yesterday, today and forever"?

As a matter of fact, the number and variety of MSS. and versions to be compared render it comparatively easy for scholars competent to the task to arrive at a know-

ledge of the original text ; and it is demonstrated by the best Biblical scholarship of the day, as was before stated, that in 999 cases out of every thousand we have in the Revised Version of the New Testament the very words of the original autographs, the very words given by the Holy Ghost to men ! But if this be true of the New Testament no apprehension need be felt for the Old, since as was earlier demonstrated, it is practically the same today as when used by our Lord and His apostles. We feel justified therefore, in concluding our consideration of the whole subject with the words of the minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, held at Washington in 1893, pronouncing "the Bible as we now have it, in its various translations and revisions, when freed from all errors and mistakes of translators, copyists and printers, to be the very Word of God, and consequently, wholly without error."

### The Spirit's Bible

"It is the Spirit Bible! copyright every word,  
He is the only Author; only His thoughts are  
heard.

Oh, let us love His Bible, written by His own  
hand,

Though it today is printed and published in  
every land.

Was it a veil uplifted? His was the raising  
power,

Showing the distant future, centuries in an  
hour.

Was it a prophet's whisper heard in the inmost  
shrine?

His was the breath that breathed it—it was  
the voice divine.

Was it a dream in slumber? His was the magic  
skill,

Hushing the human spirit, bowed to His own  
sweet will.

Was it an angel visit? Was it a written roll?  
It was the same good Spirit, teaching the pa-  
tient soul;

Giving the prophet knowledge; giving the  
choicest word;

Keeping the hand from errors; wonderful hon-  
or conferred!

Moved by the Holy Spirit; moved by a guiding  
Mind;

Moved in the heart's emotions; moved where  
they else were blind.

So in the least iota His was the ruling will:  
Every little sentence showing a Master's skill.  
Beautiful holy Bible! beautiful Word inspired!

God's own talk with His children when ignorant, weary and tired."—*William Luff.*

### QUESTIONS ON THE CHAPTER.

1. What admission must be made with reference to verbal inspiration?
2. In what four ways, however, may this admission be qualified?
3. What five difficulties are treated in this chapter?
4. How would you meet the first difficulty? The second? The third?
5. How would you explain certain utterances of Paul in I. Corinthians vii.?
6. What two reasons should lead us to insist on a verbally-inspired original of our translations?
7. How does the Revised Version strengthen this argument?
8. What is the present position of a great and honored body of Christians on this subject?











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